THINKING SERIOUSLY ABOUT YOUTH WORK

And how to prepare people to do it

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Partnership between the European Commission
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THINKING SERIOUSLY ABOUT YOUTH WORK

And how to prepare people to do it

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Introduction

Youth work – An incomprehensible subject? Introductory reflections on youth work

Hanjo Schild, Jan Vanhee and Howard Williamson

Introduction

It is never too late to think seriously about youth work in Europe.[1] The two European Youth Work Conventions in Belgium (Ghent 2010, Brussels 2015)[2] introduced specific dynamics in this sector: while the first event focused on the diversity of youth work, the second explored existing common ground. Both Declarations (see Appendix 1 and 2) mirror the reflections from these two conventions. In the present publication, which addresses the varied topics discussed, we want to deepen discussions on youth work in Europe and its relationship to other policy fields.

In Europe today, particularly at local and regional level, there are thousands of youth work initiatives that are meaningful to children and young people, and which are as relevant to their lives as formal education. Hundreds of thousands of youth workers are estimated to be committed to this work and thousands of youth work initiatives and projects exist. But we still do not know exactly how many youth workers do this work, and across how many youth work initiatives. We know exactly the number of schools of various types and how many teachers educate young people. We also know a lot about the professional profiles of teachers and how they are educated and trained. But in the youth field we still lack a common definition and understanding of what youth work is and what a youth worker is. A Spanish youth researcher once answered the question "What about youth work in Spain?" thus: "there is no youth work in our country since young people aren't allowed to work under the age of 18". But there is of course work with and for young people in Spain – out-of-school, in their leisure time, on a voluntary basis, and drawing on participatory principles – provided by volunteers or paid professionals.

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1. The debates on youth work in Europe are manifold; a critical reflection on (the future of) youth work and youth policy in Europe took place in the Think Tank: Friends of European Youth Policy; these reflections are well-documented and summarised in Schild et al. (2014), see in particular the contribution of H. Williamson, "A matter of concern? The future of the youth agenda in Europe" (137 ff.), available at https://go.coe.int/cLEr4, accessed 2 March 2017.
2. Available at http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/eywc-website, accessed 2 March 2017.

In many countries, however, we do not easily find "youth workers". We find people who are termed socio-cultural instructors, intercultural mediators, educators or *animateurs*, social workers, community workers, youth leaders, educators and trainers, cultural workers, volunteers and activists in youth organisations or youth movements. All of them meet at the junction of "youth work" in one way or another, but does this allow "youth work" to build an identity of its own? A teacher is a teacher, everywhere, and everybody knows what a teacher does (in a good or a bad way). But a youth worker?

Looking at youth work in the 50 countries that have signed the Council of Europe's European Cultural Convention, or even just in the (28)[3] member states of the European Union (EU), one has to admit there's more than one story. We have to be aware of the different realities and underlying theories, concepts and strategies when we think seriously about youth work in Europe. We find well-established youth work structures, mixed systems of youth work carried out by volunteers and paid youth workers, and youth work carried out exclusively by volunteers, often under poor conditions. There is a diversity of well-developed vocational education and training and higher education schemes for youth workers, along with accredited systems of recognising youth work by national authorities and high-quality curricula for youth workers.

We also know that in a few countries youth work hardly exists, and that sometimes where it does it is monitored and controlled, and sometimes suppressed, by governments. Youth work, as it is largely understood at European level, is based on values and is about the promotion of human rights, diversity, social cohesion, peace and democracy; in this respect it can easily become a thorn in the side of authoritarian systems.

Besides the fact that youth work is value-based, what youth workers have and indeed should have in common is the fact that they all work directly with and for young people in non-formal educational settings and with a defined intention. But is that all? This commonality, though helpful in outlining a shared area of activity, does not necessarily lead to a clearer picture of the diversity of youth work. It is crucial to take youth work seriously, therefore further exploration of youth work is necessary. This knowledge book tries to find some answers to the question of what youth work is while not neglecting the variety and differences in methods, disciplines, approaches and even the philosophies and ideologies underpinning it.

By analysing the theories and concepts of youth work and providing insights from perspectives that vary by geographical location and the professional background of authors, we hope to further contribute to what we started doing in the 1st European Youth Work Convention, and to a greater degree in the 2nd European Youth Work Convention: finding common ground. Thus we want to assure the quality of youth work in general and the quality of (staff) training in particular, including in the formal education systems (often in higher education) responsible for the education and training of youth workers. The competences of youth workers are crucial in this regard.

Youth work needs continuous innovation and further development; but what we have also learned in the past years from our series of seminars on the history of

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3. When this book went to press, the United Kingdom was still a member of the European Union.

youth work[4] is that we need to look back from time to time and learn from history. We do not need to reinvent the youth work wheel, but we need a critical look into what works and what does not and what the problems, challenges, obstacles and solutions are and have been. As noted at one of these seminars, held in Malta in September 2016:

> workshops do not aim at purifying an essential youth work concept irrespective of historical and cultural context … Tracing back the roots of youth work and identifying different evolutions within and between countries must help us to feed a fundamental discussion on youth work's multifaceted and multi-layered identity and to cope in a constructive way with recurrent youth work dilemmas. (European Commission/Council of Europe 2016)

Across Europe, youth work displays huge differences with regard to opportunities, support, structures, recognition, and the realities in which it takes place. It may be part of the public sector, run by the state, or the social economy (or the third sector), including a wide range of community, voluntary and not-for-profit activities, and in most cases it is part of both. However, how youth work performs reflects the social, cultural, political and economic context, and the value systems, in which it takes place.

With regard to these contexts, as far back as 2001 an IARD study on the state of young people and youth policy in Europe suggested as a hypothesis the following typology with regard to youth work:

▶ universalistic/paternalistic: youth work as civic infrastructure addressing young people as citizens (e.g. through universal access to youth work, participatory structures);

▶ liberal/community based: youth work in a universalistic way, providing infrastructure such as youth clubs (i.e. with a strong community orientation);

▶ conservative/corporatist: youth work in a corporatist structure, providing socialisation towards the standard biography, delegated to voluntary actors;

▶ Mediterranean/sub-institutionalised: youth work facing a deficit or vacuum of regulation, often only the responsibility of local authorities, leading to regional differences.

From today's perspective a fifth type might be added covering the post-socialist countries in central and eastern Europe, while the transitional changes in the past 25 years led to a substantial adaptation of not only "Western-style" economic regimes but also welfare regimes.

Why do we highlight this dimension? As Axel Pohl concluded in his key input at the workshop in Malta, connecting social and youth work issues to societal contexts helps to understand and interpret similarities and differences (Pohl 2016).

As we have emphasised, it is not our objective to distil these perspectives into a single, essential youth work concept, but we need to overcome the differences in terms of opportunities by strengthening co-operation in the youth field with the aim of making sure that we "provide opportunities for all young people to shape

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4. Available at http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/history-of-youth-work, accessed 2 March 2017.

their own futures".[5] Many questions remain as to how this could be best done. The economic crisis has turned into a crisis of democracy and in the follow-up a loss of democratic principles and increased authoritarianism prevail. We need to insist that young people are a resource for democracy and human rights and not victims or followers of authoritarian solutions, nor should they be reduced to taxpayers and sustainers of a demographic balance. This leads to the question of how one counteracts the tendency to instrumentalise youth work for predominantly other interests, be it economics or politics.

One way out is a strategy to communicate the strengths, impact and capacities of youth work to those outside the youth sector, namely those who are not familiar with youth work. The other solution is to continue sharing practices and insights with others in the youth field in a more systematic way. Yet another possibility is to sensitise young people to democratic and social values and to empower them to become critical citizens.

Reflections on youth work and its role and contribution for young people and for society at large must go on as the effort to provide high-quality youth work that meets the needs and expectations of young people has to be continued. This comes at a time – as many experts underline – in which young people are facing increasing challenges, in terms of transitions to adulthood, precariousness, uncertainty and insecurity. At a moment where youth work is needed more than ever to support and empower young people to realise their potential, many member states are limiting or diminishing their provision of youth work support, faced with increasing demand and competition for the limited resources and the proclaimed need to implement austerity measures.

In this respect the expected recommendation on youth work of the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers (see Appendix 3) leads us in the right direction: it proposes to establish and proactively develop youth work within local, regional and national youth policy, and hereby emphasises the need to pay special attention to legislation, strategies, frameworks and co-ordination and to clarify and define a set of core competences for practising youth work, leading to a coherent competency-based framework as a basis for the education and training of youth workers.

However, the need for a medium-term strategy for the further development of European youth work demands urgent action and a strong vision, in order to improve co-ordination and widen the knowledge base; to support exchange of practice and to provide peer learning opportunities; to strengthen links between practice, policy and research; to encourage knowledge production in terms of studies and research; to map existing education and training for youth workers; to support review and evaluation; and last but not least, to provide assistance to those delivering youth work and "making" youth policy, in particular at national level. Needless to say, all actions taken should – for obvious reasons – include young people and their voices.

Having said that, the youth sector and its stakeholders and various actors in Europe are invited to think about the concrete steps that need to be taken next, such as:

▶ the creation of a European agency for the development of youth work;

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5. Peter Lauritzen (2006) has identified this as the main objective of youth work.

- ▶ the establishment of a European (summer) academy for youth policy and youth work;
- ▶ the design of an advanced European training strategy for education and training of youth workers and youth leaders, including the production of a joint university degree MA on European youth studies;
- ▶ the celebration of an annual European day of youth work;
- ▶ the drafting of a European charter on youth work.

Further reflections on these and other ideas are made in the final section of this book ("Conclusions and outlook").

Thinking seriously about youth work – And how to prepare people to do it invites all actors in the "magic triangle" of policy, practice and research in the youth field, and those beyond the youth sector interested in youth issues, to think further about youth work and become – or remain – a member of the network of friends of youth work.

This includes of course also the institutional side, which plays a crucial role in supporting young people (and youth work) in Europe, be it (at European level) in the Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers, Congress of Local and Regional Authorities, and the Parliamentary Assembly, or be it in the EU, the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union, the Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee; all are invited to have a deeper look into the issue of youth work in Europe and to see how they can take initiatives to support it.

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Section I

Theories and concepts in selected European regions and countries

Chapter 1

Winning space, building bridges – What youth work is all about

Howard Williamson

Introduction

When I was a practising youth worker (a volunteer for 15 years, a paid part-time practitioner for a further 20 years), I often felt that I was, and was perceived to be, something of a "Jack of all trades and master of none". I certainly had to turn my hand to many different activities and challenges. Did I make it up as I went along? Was there no guiding philosophy, however ill-thought through, that supported my work? Was that work simply ad hoc eclecticism or part of some implicit plan, if only to react supportively to the wishes of young people?

Certainly in my very early days as a "youth worker" (though I did not call or see myself as that), though I had no basis for arguing it through, I wanted to give voice to my less articulate friends. I represented their interests and aspirations in my local community. It was not an official position or role, just something both thrust upon me by others and perhaps also taken on by myself. But it did propel me into a leadership and advocacy role, albeit a rather modest one. Later, when I was more recognisably a youth worker rather than a peer representative, though still "just" a volunteer, I found myself "helping out", assisting on trips and camps, organising activities and, occasionally, providing support and advice to individual young people who appeared to be somewhat "on the edge" or who came to me for what was clearly more than a casual conversation. Later still, as a nationally qualified "professional" youth worker (though the question of professionalism v. professionalisation remains a thorny one), I found myself managing a diverse programme of evening and weekend (and sometimes daytime) activities for a diverse range of young people, differentiated by status (at school, in work, unemployed), gender, ethnicity and age. My youth work colleagues did what I had done before – chatted, mixed and played with young people – while my role had more gravitas: providing support for those with challenges and difficulties in their family, school or working lives, and liaising for many different reasons with, *inter alia* local business, police, health services and schools around what would now be referred to as the local "youth policy" agenda. I also led a huge number of residential – away from home – experiences, represented young people in courts and tribunals, developed community and photography projects, promoted intergenerational understanding through shared activities, and supported modest forms of youth entrepreneurship, from skateboarding fashion to music compilation tapes (now completely obsolete as an idea!).

So what defined me as a "youth worker"? Without recourse to the theory and the thinking that I now know, I would have said: the nature of my relationship with young people; my listening skills and responsiveness; my observation and proactiveness in terms of both activity and engagement with others (who were having adverse effects on the lives of "my" young people); my determination to win and give space to young people as a whole and to specific sub-groups of the young people I worked with (for example, those with minority tastes seeking to use communal music systems, girls and younger kids wanting to use the pool table); and my commitment to personal advocacy, advice and support. Furthermore, I understood from an early point that young people made use of youth work for many different reasons: simply to be with their mates, to broaden their experiences, as a sanctuary from the pressures of family and school life, and other things.

None of this is very far from the core "tensions" (though they are very positive and valuable tensions) that characterise youth work: its diversity, which permits important flexibilities in practice but which can appear to others as an absence of focus and clear purpose; its provision of space for young people to come together and be young; and simultaneously, its capacity to create opportunities, experiences and interactions that represent stepping stones, or bridges, as young people move along the path towards adulthood, citizenship and greater personal responsibility. I am sure that if you asked the thousands of young people I have worked with what their experience of youth work had done for them, their answer would be some combination of the above. And, though written in more precise and concise language, these are the elements of the 2nd European Youth Work Declaration – the common ground on which, from the evidence mustered so far in the series on the history of youth work in Europe (Verschelden et al. 2009; Coussée et al. 2010; Coussée, Williamson and Verschelden 2012; Taru, Coussée and Williamson 2014; Siurala et al. 2016), all forms of youth work are constructed.

What I did not understand, however, was the extent to which my particular forms of youth work practice deviated from or conformed to youth work practice elsewhere in the United Kingdom, let alone other parts of Europe. Our own personal, practical reference points are, of course, important, but for us to make better, stronger sense of youth work as a practice distinct from, say, social work or formal education, we have to connect them to debates and ideas about youth work at national and international levels. That is the intended contribution of Section I of this book: to "position" youth work as a distinctive practice and as a discrete component of wider policy directed towards and responsive to young people.

A reflection on this section

The recollections of my own autobiographical youth work practice resonate strongly with the arguments and observations made in this section of the book. My practice, perhaps I should now falsely claim, was a concrete exercise in "grounded theory"! In fact, I discovered the theory long after I initiated the practice, and continue to do so, testing both old and new ideas against my past activity – the process of praxis. Indeed, at the heart of youth work practice lies the idea of the reflective practitioner (Schön 1983), constantly weighing options within the inherent tensions and

contradictions of youth work, testing them out and learning from them, before applying them, adapted and modified according to different circumstances and conditions, once again.

The tensions and contradictions alluded to throughout the contributions below are endemic, and arguably unavoidable and irresolvable.

Some of the tensions at play and at work

Political

▶ legislatively embedded in youth policy v. on the political periphery;

▶ structurally separated/isolated v. having expectations of connection (e.g. with schooling, social work, justice);

▶ continuity/stability v. change/transformation/reform;

▶ universal v. targeted;

▶ individualised v. collective;

▶ educative v. therapeutic;

▶ centralisation (top-down) v. pluralisation (bottom up).

Ideological/theoretical

▶ professionalisation v. volunteering;

▶ personal development v. societal renewal;

▶ tradition (e.g. values, philosophy, practice) v. innovation;

▶ means to an end v. medium of expression;

▶ developmental v. compensatory;

▶ relational v. structural;

▶ distinction v. connection;

▶ an open road v. a pre-planned route.

Practical

▶ narrow focus (concentrated fusillade) v. diversity/flexibility (scattergun approach);

▶ order and structure v. chaos and spontaneity;

▶ process v. outcomes;

▶ single issue v. multi-dimensional;

▶ proactive v. reactive;

▶ individual advice and support v. group work and peer learning;

▶ more formalised, curriculum driven v. less formalised, young person-centred;

▶ linked to wider youth policy agendas (e.g. labour market insertion, health promotion) v. separated from them;

- ▶ strengthening youth work in other sectoral practice v. other sectoral practice diluting youth work;
- ▶ innovative and contemporary v. traditional and "tried and tested";
- ▶ raising the game v. selling out.

A key question is, does "youth work" stop on and something else start any of these continua?

Where youth work becomes more professionalised, through, for example, taking on new challenges in bridging the gaps between the circumstances of young people and their destinations in learning and working (as in the case of the Youth.inc developments in Malta), where does this leave more "traditional" youth work delivered substantially by volunteers? They may be no less "professional", but the recognition and certainly the accreditation of their youth work may not be at the same level.

In the following pages, throughout Section I, attention will be given to what might be called the "youth work journey" in particular countries. The nature of that attention will be different, in part because of the decisions of the authors and in part because of the specificities of the country or region under discussion. Consideration is given to the politics around youth work and whether or not it is provided recognition through legislation, definitions and resource allocation. Other contributors address the role of youth work in both policy development and practice, both conceptually and empirically, and both in relation to what might be called its "internal" provision (the shape, breadth and depth of youth work practice, from, for example, open club-based work to issue-based projects) and its external relations with other domains of youth policy, such as formal education, health promotion or criminal justice. The evolution of that role, or roles, demands consideration of further matters around training, professionalisation, standards and quality assurance. And that, in turn, raises questions as to whether the processes enshrined in youth work are enough, or whether the outcomes and impacts on young people are of equal or greater significance. And if so, how can these be demonstrated? These issues are given greater weight in some contributions than others. And, of course, one hopes that a virtuous cycle is established. As the place and partnership of youth work in relation to both young people's lives and societal concerns about young people is strengthened, so greater recognition flows – in theory. In reality, so these accounts inform us, the place of youth work within youth policy and in terms of wider political recognition ebbs and flows. Positive development and evolution can be cut short by a change in political regime or political priorities. Even from these 12 contributions, written at a particular historical moment, we can see where youth work is currently on a positive trajectory, where it is on a downward path, and where it has only just taken root in the topsoil of social and political understanding.

Even those of us who have spent a lifetime in and around "youth work" continue to struggle to make ourselves understood when explaining what youth work is and how it needs to be distinguished from its nearest relatives: education more generally, and social work. Though often cast as a quintessentially non-formal educational practice, youth work's history can also be strongly attached to traditions of social work.[6]

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6. The social work legacy for youth work is the subject of the forthcoming Volume 6 of the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership's *The history of youth work in Europe* series.

Contemporaneously, there are questions about how, if at all, youth work should be connected to other youth policy initiatives in, for example, schooling, vocational training, employment or criminal justice (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: The origins and destinations of youth work

Training and employment
Education
[Development]

Wider youth policy priorities:

Schooling

Vocational training

Employment

Criminal justice

Youth

Youth work

Social work
Youth justice
[Care and control]
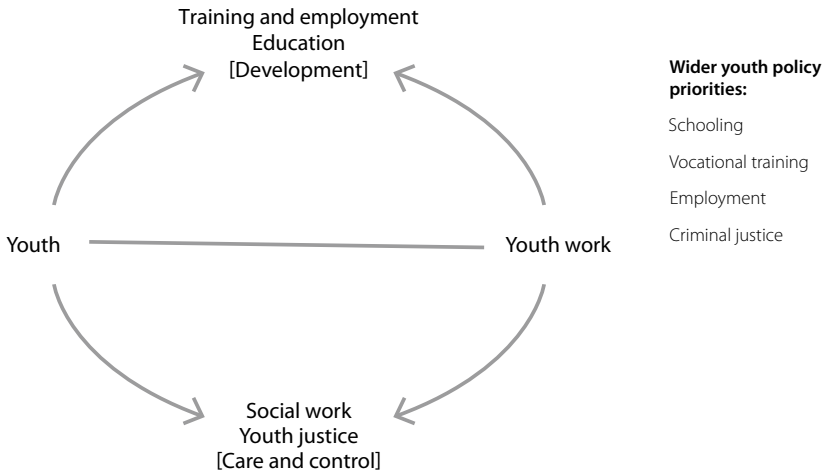
It is no surprise, therefore, that the accounts that follow discuss both the emancipatory/developmental/learning dimensions of youth work and those that are more concerned with regulation, correction and control. The advice, counselling and guidance aspects of youth work fall right across this continuum. Nor is it a surprise that while youth work is sometimes firmly dissociated from both formal education and social work, it is also often expected to be connected to wider youth policy concerns such as school inclusion or youth crime prevention. No wonder there are tensions and pressures as the "opportunity-focused" mantras around youth work (and "youth policy") are sucked into the "problem-oriented" priorities of so much public policy directed towards young people, even if this collaboration, paradoxically, can help to produce, cement and sustain the resource base for youth work to develop (Siurala et al. 2016). It should already be evident that the dilemmas outlined above – the pushes and pulls, the forces from above and from below, the influences that always threaten to corrode the "purity" of the youth work vision – are going to remain with youth work, and those involved in youth work are going to have to find ways of dealing with them – philosophically, theoretically, politically, and on the ground. Youth work is something of a mongrel, a hybrid, or as Filip Coussée and I once suggested (Coussée and Williamson 2011), a hydra that has to be looking in many different directions in order to reconcile many different demands, assumptions and expectations. We suggested at the time that an over-emphasis on measurement, outcomes, indicators and so forth, at the expense of time, space, relationships and processes, would lead to the "dehydration" of youth work. Filip had made the point that "you don't grow grass by pulling it", and I noted that youth workers were gardeners, not mechanics:

youth work was about cultivating the talents and interests of young people, not fixing the problems that they caused.

To return to the notion of youth work being a mongrel, cross-bred from developmental and progressive education and preventative and restorative social work (and, arguably, diversionary and reintegrative youth justice), it is perhaps worth noting that at the 1st European Youth Work Convention, I considered the assertion made by one participant that youth work was like a stray dog, looking for a home (and somebody to feed it!). I pointed out that there were many types of dogs: defenders and protectors, retrievers, companions, guides and more. Youth workers performed all of these functions, not just one, even if the preferred role for youth work in some countries was now firmly linked to the agenda of re-engaging young people aged 16 to 24 not in education, employment or training (NEETs), and a "retriever" role (go and find them and return them to formal education, training or employment!). Youth work has to preserve its capacity to do much more than that, if it is to respond positively and purposefully to the different needs, wants and issues facing a diversity of young people. But in defending that position, it struggles once again to position and promote itself with clarity and conviction. Once more, youth work can appear vague, unfocused and ad hoc, giving the impression of offering little more than what one UK youth minister once called a "scattergun" approach to its practice rather than the "concentrated fusillade" that he required (indeed demanded – it led, in 1990, to the formulation of a "curriculum" for youth work, an idea that was, and remains, anathema to some youth work theorists who see the idea of curriculum, as a proactively structured pedagogy, as essentially contradictory to the idea of youth work, as constructed on mutuality: relational, negotiated and responsive to the expressed perspectives and position of the young people involved).

The contributions to Section I

We see, in the contributions below, many manifestations and interpretations of the dilemmas outlined above. Redig and Coussée (Chapter 2) seek to celebrate the tensions and diversity of youth work while counselling against raising unrealistic expectations about what it can achieve or "produce". There is huge value for young people and society, they maintain, in young people having their own free zone to be young together, and having the opportunity to escape "the paternalistic power of adults". In Flanders (Belgium), where youth work has historically been conscientiously kept separate from schooling and social work (despite its roots in both), there are risks of it becoming more focused on "problem solving" and it being required to be useful, rather than "playful". Redig and Coussée warn us of some of the more negative consequences for youth work of becoming more connected to other youth policy agendas and more professionalised.

The strength and longevity of youth work traditions in Flanders is then contrasted quite dramatically with the embryonic development of youth work in the post-Soviet countries of eastern Europe and the Caucasus – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova and the Russian Federation. Youth work there struggles to shrug off past perspectives concerned with dealing with "problem" youth and to adopt and accommodate contemporary European ideas that youth work is about

learning and opportunity. Petrivska (Chapter 3) notes that youth work is usually only a small item within much broader youth policy, policy that is now focused significantly on the challenges of youth unemployment, having passed through phases embracing other "youth policy" priorities since the demise of the Soviet Union. Many more marginal groups of young people have little possibility of even engaging with youth work that exists. The concept remains in its infancy and the practice under-developed.

Pudar Draško (Chapter 12) takes a similar approach in her attempt to capture the differential development of youth work across the countries of South-East Europe. Like the Soviet Union, work with young people in the Balkan region had formerly been youth care – the organisation of young people in the interests of the state. Since around 1989, and following conflict in the region, rather different pillars for the advocacy of youth work have been constructed: peace building and human rights, non-formal education, networking and advocacy for youth policies, and project-based work undertaken by youth organisations. European frameworks for "youth work", articulated both by the European Commission and by the Council of Europe, have been key drivers and vehicles for promoting "modern" ideas about youth work. To date, however, this has had a relatively modest impact, with few countries making explicit reference to youth work in their embryonic and evolving youth policy documents. Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia and especially Serbia are exceptions to this situation. Serbia has taken a strong lead in promoting youth work. There may be some criticism of this (see Potočnik and Williamson 2015) but there has certainly been political commitment to, and professional development of recognisable forms of youth work practice, even if resources have been limited and implementation often patchy. Pudar emphasises the importance of being aware of the often significant gulf between rhetoric and reality, and the huge challenge around producing sustainability in youth work practice; too much remains project-based and state concerns are strongly focused on the current key issue of youth unemployment and "employability".

Kiilakoski (Chapter 4) moves away from an historical perspective to one that threads through the political, economic and social landscape within which youth work in Finland takes place. Like Flanders, Finland has had a robust commitment to youth work for many years. This has been embedded and endorsed, according to Kiilakoski, through "socio-political" affirmation of youth work as a public service with commensurate professional standing, "cultural-discursive" attention to defining and understanding what youth work is for, and "material-economic" provision of the resources to serve the needs and interests of young people as individuals and in groups. Despite some changes in approaches to youth work around social inclusion and new forms of youth participation, this virtuous triangle of commitment to youth work continues to provide legitimacy for forms of practice focused on education, citizenship and development, thereby avoiding the risk of youth work becoming individualised, institutionalised and problem-oriented, which can easily become the direction of travel for youth work in a neo-liberal age.

Indeed, the situation in England (Chapter 14) demonstrates what a risk this can be. Without a theoretical and political framework to guide it, Grace and Taylor contend, it slips uncritically away from the "fragile, yet fertile world of process-led youth work

practice" and comes to be governed instead by the very antithesis of its dialogical tradition – by the "naive embrace" of outcome-driven imperatives, spurious theories of change and individualised concepts of youth development. Such revisions to youth work can be considered, by the outsider, to be providing "much-needed order to a practice [often] perceived to be unruly and rudderless". But is it still "youth work"? Grace and Taylor maintain that, even in this neo-liberal age, youth work can – indeed, must – hold on and defend alternative ideological positions concerned with politics, radicalism and democratic education. Youth work remains a contested, ideological and theoretical space; they draw on Devlin's view that youth workers have to be skilled in the "negotiation of ambivalence" and need a framework of thinking that enables them to contest the "smoke and mirrors" of contemporary youth policy that seeks to confine and condemn "youth work" to a poor shadow of its raison d'être.

Devlin himself (Chapter 7) points out that the Republic of Ireland is one of the few countries with an explicit legal definition of youth work, emphasising its educative and participative character. It is both distinctive and connected to other policy domains, concerned with both the promise and the problems of young people. Devlin makes the important observation that, in youth work, how things are done is as important, arguably even more important, than what is actually done. This engages with questions about the balance between process and product, and the values that inform the practice. There may be aspirational and specified outcomes, but the work still has to be informed by principles such as ensuring voice, commitments to inclusion, and providing challenges and enjoyment. Professional youth workers may be more adept at the delivery of such "planned, purposeful and conscious" youth work though, as with Flanders, while the professionalisation of youth work may strengthen its role and recognition, it also produces greater expectations about the contribution it can make, especially through interdisciplinary activity. That, paradoxically, can also lead to the weakening of the distinctive identity of youth work. It is no surprise that Devlin speaks of the need for the negotiation of ambivalence.

Building bridges not just for young people in transition but also with other related domains of practice with young people is, of course, another scenario for youth work. Besse, Camus and Carletti (Chapter 5) report on the various reasons for the historical weaknesses attached to the idea of youth work in France, and how it is uneasily and weakly positioned between, and overshadowed by, the professions of social work and schooling (education). Youth work (in its French form, *animation*, though "*travail de jeunesse*" is now also sometimes used) does not have the strong identity of other professions, but it has found a place supporting both more included young people in processes of youth participation and engagement, and more excluded young people in social and labour market integration. Those are now the strengths of contemporary youth work in France, winning it provisionally greater recognition despite the fact that no specific qualifications are required to do it; its weakness lies in the fact that these forms of youth work generally fail to reach or touch the vast majority of young people who are neither on pathways to active citizenship nor dropouts or delinquents.

Bridging gaps is not new to youth work in many settings. But where it is new is in the recently professionalised practice of youth work in Malta. Traditionally, even those who qualified as professional youth workers through the Programme of

Youth Studies at the University of Malta remained volunteers. There was no paid employment for youth workers. But since the very recent establishment of the Maltese Youth Agency and the increased political recognition of youth work, through legislation and a code of ethics, a professional cadre of paid practitioners has come into being. As with Belgium and Ireland, this professionalisation has been accompanied by greater expectations to support positive outcomes in young people's lives, in the case of Malta in relation to labour market insertion and destinations. Teuma (Chapter 9) argues, however, that far from being subsumed and subordinated within an employment and employability agenda (even if this is the paramount rationale for the youth work involvement), youth work has helped to shape a more constructive learning programme through the injection of youth work principles and practice. And, rather like in France, youth workers in Malta serve as go-betweens, facilitators, mediators and negotiators between the worlds and aspirations of young people in "NEET" situations and the labour market contexts that may be open to them. Some youth work philosophies may rage against such connections, but Teuma maintains that, far from "selling out", this is more about "raising the game"; the outcomes secured with the support of youth work, which has demonstrated its capacity to rise to new challenges and address new possibilities, have strengthened its reputation and recognition.

Malta is very clear that youth work is not linked to social work. This is in stark contrast to Germany, where a great deal of youth work practice remains formally attached to child and youth welfare provision. As Thimmel (Chapter 6) observes, there is voluntary youth work provision that embraces much of the educational and democratic philosophy of one strand of youth work, but what is supported by public resources is more precisely conceptualised as youth social work, targeted towards more disadvantaged, troubled and troublesome young people and sometimes requiring involuntary participation (which is anathema to many prevailing definitions of what counts as youth work). Thimmel suggests that educational and democratic youth work is being steadily subordinated to a youth work that is expected to be concerned with guidance, prevention and targeting through special projects and outreach work aimed very specifically at the young unemployed or young migrants. Parallels with the English context should be evident.

Youth work in Spain remains characterised by enormous diversity and no formal qualifications are required to undertake it. Nor is there really a Spanish word for "youth work" though there are many similarities in practice with other parts of Europe. There is limited central direction, and youth work (like other youth policy) is largely decentralised and a matter for regional or local autonomy and determination. Like many other parts of Europe, youth work activity in Spain can be broadly categorised into the traditions and practices of youth movements, the work with young people undertaken within youth policies, and specific, more welfare-oriented provision for marginalised, vulnerable and "at-risk" young people. But while other contributors have pointed to the often quite significant gulf between "free-time" education concerned with empowerment and citizenship, and social work-related interventions concerned with social integration and control, Pareja (Chapter 13) contends that "painting things in black and white serves no purpose". Youth work may have different traditions but these are often closely connected. He does, however, make the point

that youth work is recognised through both legislation and through funding for its work in supporting both the transitions of young people and their civic and political participation. In that respect, his arguments resonate closely with the "bridges" and "spaces" that epitomise the common ground of youth work.

Yet another story emerges in Italy, where the emergence of fascism interrupted an earlier position and tradition of non-interference in youth-led spaces, allowing association-based youth education outside the school to thrive. Where the state did intervene, it was for reparative purposes, derived from social work. After the defeat of fascism, greater democratic "self-government" was promoted by the Allies in the youth field but there was also momentum to regain ground by the Catholic Church. As a result, participatory experiences and experiments did not last and "youth work" as a concept largely receded for a number of decades, resurfacing only at the turn of the millennium. Current developments, according to Morciano (Chapter 8), can be slotted comfortably into a typology developed some years before in Ireland (Hurley and Treacy 1993), around the themes of personal development versus mutual association, and character building versus democratic renewal. Morciano's contribution emphatically demonstrates the challenges youth work faces around continuity and change.

The different challenge for France and Spain in finding a suitable linguistic phrase for "youth work" is also faced by Poland, where Krzaklewska (Chapter 10) informs us that any literal translation can be misleading. Nonetheless, despite historical links with social work, youth work in contemporary Poland, like Spain, is characterised by diversity and decentralisation. And like many other countries, too, there is some clear distinction between more educative, developmental, open access and "bottom-up" forms of practice and those that are more therapeutic, compensatory or correctional. The former is premised on voluntary participation; the latter may require attendance and engagement. Like Portugal and Malta, youth work practice has recently been professionalised in Poland through the formal inclusion of the occupational role in the List of Professions and Specialisations. Yet as a result of very limited central direction, there continues to be a pluralisation of local initiatives. Such a multiplicity of frameworks within which youth work has the possibility of flourishing presents the greatest challenge for current trends towards professionalisation and standards.

Conclusion

From these 12 country accounts it becomes very clear that while there is a complex mosaic of "youth work" across Europe and within different countries, there are also many common threads that connect at least some of those different countries, and common concerns as well as common grounds for advocacy of particular approaches to youth work, anchored by common philosophies, though sometimes these derive from their roots in progressive education and at other times they emanate from social work and social welfare traditions.

It should not be surprising that such diversity prevails. The countries and regions discussed have very different histories, lineages, contexts, and approaches to advocacy and understanding. We could map many of them onto a grid (Figure 2), with two critical axes for profiles of the state of youth work in a given country: its level

of recognition and support, and its dependence on links with other agencies and other youth policy aspirations.

Figure 2: Recognition and autonomy of youth work in selected countries

Connection with other agencies and agendas
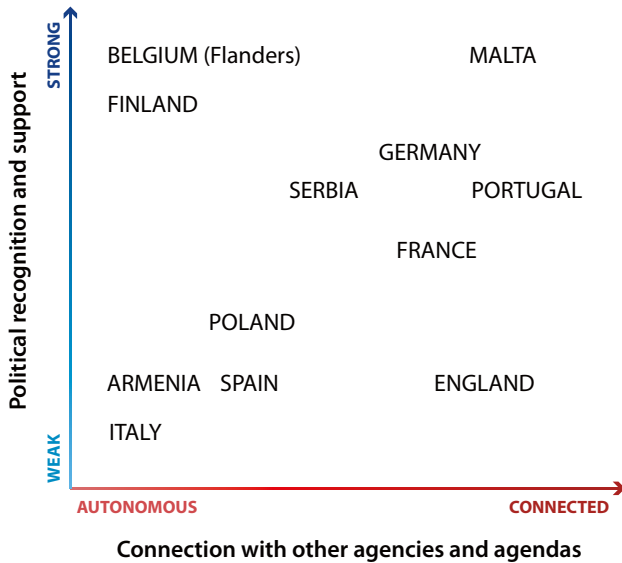
Of course, none of this is cast in stone forever, nor are we always on a progressive upward path towards robust political and financial support and purposeful and positive connections. England is a sad example of a youth work story of dramatic ebbs and flows, erratic and changing political expectations, and a recent downward spiral to the point of almost decimation (Unison 2016) – except in terms of practice committed to the "retrieval" of young people depicted as NEETs or the promotion of community volunteering and social action. More historically, elsewhere, Morciano points out why the state has kept its distance from involvement in youth work since 1945, when "The Allies simultaneously helped to lay the foundations for a process of de-fascistisation among youth, developing educational programmes based on the principles of personal initiative, accountability, respect and mutual aid, the practice of freedom and ability to self-govern". As in France, state intervention and interference in the world of "youth work" carries unhappy historical memories, and development is left to local self-determination.

Such local self-determination may be no bad thing, except that it produces huge inconsistencies in what might be called the "youth work offer" to young people. Should it really be a geographical lottery that dictates young people's access to the kinds of opportunities and experiences conferred by youth work? Equally, should youth work stand alone and apart from the big issues facing many young people throughout Europe today – their (non-)working lives, their (un)healthy lifestyles, their marginalisation, their unwanted mobility, their immigrant status and more? But if it seeks to connect or is required to connect, on what terms are such connections

forged? To paraphrase Pareja – the diversity of youth work can be an asset but there is also a need to improve co-ordination and connections among the different stakeholders and institutions and to gradually overcome each one's inertias and traditions, if they are holding them back.

Many obsolete boundaries and barriers (though we must be sure that these are "sacred cows" to be slain and not "cherished values" to be defended) obstruct the common goal of the integration and emancipation of young people – if that really is the common goal not just of youth work but of wider work with young people, through a transversal and cross-sectoral youth policy framework. Not that this has yet been achieved, anywhere, but it should remain our aspiration.

As Pareja concludes, we must avoid defending youth work from a purely sectoral standpoint, as it is very difficult to close up (down?) a field that, by definition, is open, complex and interconnected. We have to celebrate our diversity, as the 1st European Youth Work Declaration did, but we also have to be confident and clear about our common ground, the subject of the 2nd European Youth Work Declaration. The chapters in this section demonstrate just how varied a contribution, anchored firmly within a number of shared principles, youth work can make to young people and the societies in which they live.

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Chapter 2

Youth work in Flanders – Playful usefulness and useful playfulness [7]

Guy Redig and Filip Coussée

Summary

What is Flemish youth work about? It can be described as a collective of diverse youth associations, owned by young people, organising themselves autonomously in their leisure time. Widespread locally and very popular, aimed at both children and young people, Flemish youth work creates its own free zone for youth to be young together. As there are very few professionals at local level, almost all responsibilities are undertaken by very young volunteers. These individuals have emancipated themselves from once-strong ideological systems and seem to be naturally buffered from, and even resistant to, commercial and utilitarian approaches. To date, the Flemish Government has respected and even promoted this attitude, and the state subsidises the supporting infrastructure and works with a comprehensive youth policy plan with an emphasis on youth work. Still, Flemish youth work can be seen as a middle-class programme for the most part, with only a few specialised and professionalised initiatives dealing with youth at risk. Will this concept, which has long been dependent on the autonomous engagement of volunteer youth, survive?

Looking back

The definition and organisation of youth work in a specific country or region draws on its history of political, cultural and social evolutions and revolutions. This is not surprising, as Flanders lies at a crossroads and is even on the front line of several influences (Wildemeersch and Redig 2003; Vos and Gevers 2009; Coussée 2010).

The Catholic majority was strongly dominant in all parts of society until the final decades of the 20th century. Here, youth work was a tool to conquer the "soul of the child" and to protect the pre-eminence of the Church. It was fully embedded in what is called the "pillarisation" of society. Although socialist, liberal and Flemish-nationalist organisations were active, they were completely dominated by the Church.

The Flemish prehistory of youth work field begins in both social work and schools. For the former, we refer to the so-called patronages (translating literally to "protective

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7. After D. Wildemeersch's description of the paradox of Flemish youth work.

care for children and young people"). Youth work in schools can be traced back to the student movements (in secondary schools and universities). Flemish youth work was also influenced by international tendencies, like the more southern European paternalistic and social remediation approach (drawing on Don Bosco's parochial concept of youth care), the romantic, middle class and significant German *Wandervogel* (hippies avant la lettre) and Baden-Powell's concept of Scouting. One can observe an influence of both Anglo-American methods focusing on the acquisition of individual skills and values such as autonomy, self-control and fair play and the German youth movements, guided by the romantic ideal of a close and strong community.

The interbellum period polarised youth work. Whether adhering to a left-wing or right-wing position, youth work was imbued with a strong fascist character, as manifest in songs, uniforms, flags, parades, and fervour towards the idea of a homeland, a religion and a strong leader. By the time of the Second World War there was only one important variety of youth work left: youth movements (i.e. uniformed youth organisations working with children and young people). But working with both children and young people – rather untypically in a European context – remains today an important characteristic of Flemish youth work.[8] In Flanders, these youth associations are still called youth movements, although they have little to do with the historical youth movements, which were social movements, such as the Young Socialist Guards or the Catholic Flemish students' movement. Those movements were more or less led by young people, with adult support and guidance.

This situation changed, sometimes turbulently, in the 1960s. The rise of the welfare state created a generation of highly educated young people in a golden cage of prosperity. They observed, and increasingly criticised, the way their parents had constructed society. As a result, the youth movements lost much of their appeal. Most underwent a huge identity crisis, discussing the essence of concepts such as uniforms, separated male/female activities and their strong attachment to an ideological family. Surprisingly, after a decade of severe troubles and endemic crises, starting in the 1990s, they reinvented themselves to become again the most successful example of Flemish youth work.

Meanwhile, new forms of youth work had been born. They were often linked to the youth movements, in their way of presenting themselves going back to their own history, but pedagogically referring to the changing times after the emblematic 1968. There was a real boom of youth clubs. Many hundreds became a real sanctuary where young people could live their own life, through activities organised by their peers, while escaping the paternalistic control of adults. These youth clubs survived for a decade, before commercially organised youth spaces (e.g. cafes, dancehalls) took over, although hundreds of youth clubs are still active.

As a critical response to the conservative educational system and inspired by progressive pedagogy, youth work was enlarged with hundreds of creative workshops (e.g. visual arts and music). They opposed the unfriendly, authoritarian

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8. Flemish youth work still targets young people ranging from toddlers to young adults. For local practices of youth work, the target group can be described as being between 6 and 25 years. At the Flemish level, the maximum age is between 30 and 35.

way children were drilled to express themselves, killing spontaneous creativity, and offered an alternative way. But it took the Ministry of Education decades to change its old-fashioned approach.[9]

As in the rest of Europe, the 1980s were a time of severe social and financial crisis. The welfare state shook on its foundations. The recognition of vast societal problems, such as persistent poverty and disaffected immigrant youth along with growing unemployment, triggered a shift to defensive and problem-driven public policies. These were bad times for culture, including youth work, which had a typically optimistic approach. Playing and being young together lost all societal relevance and was considered undeserving of public funding. The little money available was set aside to solve problems – to be useful, not playful. So youth work as it was vanished from the public and political agenda. However, new forms of youth work arose, often originating in youth clubs that had lost their public appeal and shifted their focus to problematic target groups, especially young immigrants, often Muslim. The larger youth clubs obtained support from the Flemish Government and became almost the only local variety of youth work organisation with local professional youth workers.

In the background, from the bottom up, local governments started with local youth policy that originally prioritised the support of youth work (youth organisations) as well as enabling the participation of young people to influence local policy (youth councils). Soon, they started developing their own youth work concepts, especially activities during holidays,[10] and added a third stream referring to broader youth policy: the local integration of all efforts targeting young people.

The awakening

Redefining participation by finding autonomy

Although the 1980s brought about a profound crisis, especially for what was sometimes called "traditional youth work" (youth movements), the following decade witnessed a real revival. Youth work reinvented itself. It liberated itself from the hegemony of old, once-powerful ideological systems. It broke out of pillarisation,[11] like one tight and militant enlaced family (Catholic, socialist, liberal, nationalist), and became more autonomous than ever before. The most profound (r)evolution transpired in the thousands of local youth work initiatives. They succeeded in constructing a new combination of traditional characteristics flavoured with an up-to-date aura. A critical success factor was certainly the very young volunteers who were responsible.

The vast majority of local Flemish youth work initiatives is thus in the capable hands of young people aged between 16 and 23 years and for about 99%, conducted on

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9. Flanders has a system of "arts education" offered to everyone in their leisure time. It is organised by the Ministry of Education (not the Ministry of Culture), with professional teachers in a school environment.

10. Municipalities became the most important organisers of summer playground activities and Grabbelpas, a holiday passport giving access to leisure activities.

11. Sectarianism based on ideological families: party, press, schools, welfare and health, culture and sports, all clustered in one tight and militant enlaced family.

a voluntary basis. This has both pros and cons. The changing of the guard takes place every two to three years, with new individuals taking over the responsibility of running youth work; if young people start taking on more responsibility in youth work at the age of 16 or 17, aged 23 to 25 they are already looking to exit (local) youth work.

In those years, the traditions of youth work initiatives obtained a new coating. Generation after generation succeeded, highly autonomously, in constructing a marriage between old characteristics and up-to-date, highly attractive projects. Today, Flemish youth work is described by the slogan "by, through and for young people". It defines youth work participation as co-ownership, successful until today.

Defining Flemish youth work: methodical diversity, a shared identity

The official definition of youth work was formulated by the Flemish Government in 2012[12] through a law that stated:

> youth work is socio-cultural work based on non-commercial purposes by or for children and young people aged 3 to 30 years in their leisure time, under pedagogical guidance and to promote the general and comprehensive development of children and young people who participate on a voluntary basis and which is organised by young people, private youth organisations or local authorities.

Elaborating crucial elements of this definition provides more depth and background.

Youth work is offered and owned by young volunteers

This first element of a shared identity may arouse jealousy in other countries and regions, but it is also the most controversial. Flanders has a unique position in European youth work because it is without doubt one of the regions where the youth association as a social and cultural phenomenon has never disappeared and remains strong to this day, in terms of numbers and relevance. Flemish youth associations in all their diversity reach about one in four of our young people, and even more in rural areas and in the youngest cohorts. Youth movements, locally very numerous, often set the tone in our youth work debate. This is surprising in an international context; initiatives are (locally) completely organised by young people themselves, who bear nearly all responsibility autonomously.

Youth work is for fun, play and being young together

Without denying the existence of values and potentials in other areas and sectors in society, youth work develops in leisure time (next to school/work and personal/family time) and defines as its principal goal giving young people chances to be young together, to construct their own projects, to have fun. An emphasis on playing and being cheerful gives youth work a dual identity: useful playfulness and playful utility.

Youth work emphasises processes rather than products

The concepts of informal or non-formal education are not really present in the description of Flemish youth work, because education and learning are strongly

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12. Decree on youth policy of the Flemish Government, voted by the Flemish Parliament in 2012.

associated with the educational (school) system. Flemish youth work is not close to schools, it is a cultural, leisure activity. By this logic, youth work also clearly delimits itself from its other root, social work. So youth work has not only emancipated itself from adults and their (ideological) associations, it is not at all part of school and social work systems. This deliberately implies that youth work does not bother too much about the outcomes it produces. Youth work is about playing and being young together. This can be highly educational and useful, but these are not the primary goals. Youth work is about processes where young people discover and learn about values, and about the enjoyment derived from meeting and competing with others in an open and fair way. Through group work, young people discover ways in which we might live together with others, respecting difference and diversity. Although, a critical reflection unveils a paradox: many local practices bring together a diverse group of young people, but mainly from the same socio-economic background.

Youth work is deeply embedded in the local community

It is locally that members are recruited and where activities take place. Youth work benefits from its embeddedness in terms of a greater tolerance towards certain annoying effects that may accompany gatherings of young people (noise, garbage, feelings of insecurity, ...). This context is also important because of the local support that voluntary youth associations need, in terms of good advice but also regarding subsidies and support. Not only youth work practice, but youth work policy, too, is connected and given shape on a local level. Youth workers and policy makers work together in finding connections to young people's "lifeworlds". The local level offers more opportunities for real and realistic youth participation.

Youth work is part of the common Flemish memory

Youth work is a part of Flemish heritage. Participation in a youth association is passed from parents to children. While historically some associations have successfully reached out to children and young people from the working class, today, participation in youth associations is mainly a middle-class affair. Despite the "super diversification" of our society, youth work has mainly concerned white children and young people. The youth associations, however, are determined to find ways to connect to groups that are hard to reach. In some cases, this means breaking with tradition, because history teaches us that youth associations never were very successful in terms of addressing socio-economic and social-cultural dividing lines in our society. In other cases, youth associations have looked to build bridges to other youth work provisions through playground work, club houses and youth initiatives that deliberately reach out to groups in the most vulnerable social situations.

Youth work is not thematically specialised

Youth workers are specialists in informal learning methods, but a youth work initiative is not a one-issue group. Youth work focuses on overall development and broad personality development and offers a very wide range of activities in the spheres of recreation, culture, sports, outdoor life, adventure, etc.

Youth work has no strong attachment to adult systems

There are hardly any older adults[13] involved in youth work in Flanders, especially not in direct relation (also defined as "first-line" work) with young members. Even at higher levels young volunteers themselves take the lead, and are only to a small extent supported by (young) professionals (like in the historical German youth movements or Don Bosco's Oratorios, where young people guided young people). A specific element that clarifies why the youth association is the measure for all youth work in Flanders is that we barely distinguish between children's activities and activities with and for young people. The youth work age ranges from 3 to 30. The initiatives that deliberately reach out to young people in difficult situations are carried out by professional youth workers, increasingly recruited from the same groups as the young people they reach out to. These initiatives try to find a good mix between adult experience and youthful enthusiasm. Participation, recreation and association are key concepts in these practices.

Youth work is indifferent, even resistant to commercial interference

While somehow all forms of youth culture are sooner or later captured by commercial interests, the youth associations, but also other youth work provisions, have always been free from commercial interference in Flanders. This makes youth work a rare place in the hyper-commercialised lifeworld of children and young people.

Youth work is characterised by a rapid changing of the guard

Particularly in the voluntary youth work sector, there is a quick turnover of members, including at the higher levels. This implies that there is a constant renewal, but also permanent instability. Therefore, it is good that youth workers find some stability in our common Flemish historical consciousness, but also in the local community. For newer initiatives reaching out to new groups in society, the support of the local community is especially necessary.

Youth work in Flanders: facts and figures

Flemish youth work is a collective of youth organisations or associations, in so far as they are autonomously managed by young people. This collective consists of specific types, of which the youth movements (e.g. Scouting) are most widespread and present at the local level. Flemish youth work can be situated on the Flemish (national) and local level.

The Flemish Government supports national youth work, constituting around 70 initiatives in three broad categories: (1) second-line institutions, which support local initiatives in their direct contact with young people; (2) first-line[14] (front-line)

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13. Adults in this context doesn't refer to the legal barrier of 18 years, but to the socioeconomic status of living an independent life, planning a family and professional life.
14. First line: meaning in direct relation with young people (children and youngsters). Second line: meaning supporting the first line workers and practices.

institutions or initiatives, offering leisure activities directly to young people; and (3) a few third-line institutions, providing a kind of interface between government and youth and youth work.

The overwhelming majority of Flemish youth work is organised in the direct environment of young people, and it consists of a collective of 4 846 private and 1 331 governmental local youth work initiatives. The vast majority of municipalities, once inspired (through grants) by the Flemish Government, have constructed a well-organised policy to support local youth work. This has manifested itself through a complex of subsidies and different kinds of practical support, often provided through an active, communicative, participatory relationship. Nearly all local authorities work intensively with their youth council. The local youth service and youth alderman co-ordinate this policy (about 800 full-time equivalent, professionals for municipal holiday leisure programmes included). Rough estimates for participation indicate that in 2014, about 17% of young people (3 to 25 years old) actually participated in youth work initiatives, 46% never participated and 37% were participants at one stage.

Critical reflections on Flemish youth work

Paradoxes and dilemmas

Although (local) Flemish youth work seems to be flourishing,[15] being diverse, widespread and popular, it is also characterised by paradoxes and dilemmas. Perhaps because youth work is owned by young people, it can be described as highly middle class, and a reproduction of an overwhelmingly middle-class society,[16] with its strengths and weaknesses.

Young people from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds, who may be poor and have low levels of education, cannot easily access youth work. Though some youth movements (in specific urban areas) or leisure programmes reach out broadly, just a few local (less than 2%) initiatives specialise in targeting groups labelled as "youth at risk", "disfavoured", "socially excluded", "vulnerable", "with an immigration background" or "ethnic-cultural minorities". These labels illustrate clearly the problem of Flemish society as a whole and youth work in particular, and raises the question of whether Flemish youth work can be seen as a realistic change agent for youth from these communities.

At the same time, Flemish youth work demonstrates an unusual authenticity through its independence, its stubborn way of tackling things, its old-fashioned trust in the ability of young leaders, and its resistance to (increasing) rules on safety, hygiene, accountability, usefulness, etc. In this context youth work lives[17] on the front line,

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15. Some youth movements (especially Scouting in cities) have to apply a *numerus clausus*, as they cannot meet the demands for participation.
16. Flanders is one of Europe's most prosperous regions. Nevertheless, 15% of the population can be categorised as "poor", and there is an increasing problem of poverty in families with young children.
17. See Jurgen Habermas' various descriptions on the colonisation of the "life world" by the "system".

although youth workers do not think of themselves as soldiers or militant flag-bearers. The following sections provide more background to these challenges.

Inclusion leads to exclusion?

Youth work in Flanders is, in essence, a "social" practice. Some young people would argue that youth work participation embellishes their CVs, but most take part for the social aspect of meeting other people, having fun and feeling connected to other people. It is this sense of belonging and being young together that makes youth work different from most other leisure activities. It is not only a matter of team spirit or shared cultural taste; the connectedness reaches beyond traditional dividing lines – although only to a certain extent. There are many examples of youth work initiatives that try to reach out to lower-skilled young people from ethnic minorities or disabled young people. There are good practices in place, but it is impossible to bridge all potential divides in one structure. If you are inclusive of all faiths, there is a big chance that there will be some sort of gender segregation. If you reach out to young people from lower socio-economic strata, there is a chance that young people from richer families will be withdrawn by their parents.

Valorisation leads to instrumentalisation?

To overcome these paradoxes, youth work needs room to experiment and reflect without being pinned down by the production of visible and measurable outcomes. This is not evident, especially in a climate of increasing cost-benefit analyses and plans based on payment by results. These are mechanisms that in other countries lead to cherry-picking and massive bureaucratisation. In Flanders, youth work today seems relatively untouched by these mechanisms, because of the highly voluntary (non-professionalised) nature of it. Some tasks that can be described internationally as youth work are, in Flanders, professionalised and "outsourced" to other social and/ or pedagogical practices such as social work and school – practices that throughout history have been differentiated from youth work. The sometimes obsessive guarding of the frontiers of youth work, with its parenting and neighbouring practices, protects youth work from instrumentalisation, but seems to go hand in hand with lesser social recognition and valorisation. Policy makers should realise that these kinds of wild zones and free spaces in society are instrumental to democracy itself.

Professionalisation leads to problematisation?

The Flemish model of local youth work is a thrilling phenomenon, though we must be aware that such a form of youth organisation requires a lot of self-organisational abilities, skills and an ample reservoir of social capital.[18] In social strata or neighbourhoods where these social resources are less present there are clearly few youth organisations. There is a need for professional forces to compensate for areas in which there is less access to social resources, though professionals should not be the main

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18. We use the term "social capital" as the cumulated collective of psychological, social, cultural, political and economic capital.

carriers of youth work initiatives. This is the essence of the very limited (unfinished) professionalisation of youth work (Lorenz, 2009).[19] There have been some attempts to introduce professionalised youth work in such a way that it includes also the re-socialisation and re-pedagogisation of youth work. After all, youth work is more than child care and keeping young people off the streets. There has a been a small revival of youth initiatives that go back to the old recipes of some youth clubs (in the 1970s) in working with a professional backbone, necessary for increased accessibility in terms of the reception of a diversity of young people both physically (more centres and longer opening hours) and mentally (connecting to lifeworlds that are further away from the mainstream, which is the frame of reference for most youth leaders). Some initiatives have developed an outreach method to work with groups on the streets, especially in housing estates of medium-sized cities. They do live up to most of the essential youth work features summed up above, but their focus on processes rather than products is strongly debated. Local policy makers expect results for the money they put into professionalisation. Therefore, they do not want "woolly" youth workers talking about belonging to something, being someone, having something to do, knowing a place to go to, meeting different people, expanding lifeworlds, and so on. What they want is fewer problems related to young people and if possible a decrease of some relevant, but individual indicators of structural social problems: fewer unemployed young people, fewer teenage pregnancies, fewer school dropouts, etc. It is however very naive to expect that structural social problems can be solved by a handful of professional youth workers. Perhaps youth workers can help to strengthen the voice of young people in the debate on the definition of these problems, but it is certain they cannot resolve on an individual or collective level what is a structural deficit of our hard and basically unjust economic system, and an increasingly hollowed-out and undermined welfare state that destroys its public provisions.

The social and pedagogical function of youth work: fun as the main feature

This chapter proclaims a rather optimistic and even believers' view on youth work, but which other social or pedagogical practice can foster and stimulate the same values, experiences and skills as youth work does, especially with the most vulnerable young people? Young people need confidence, social and emotional skills to become good citizens. Non-formal learning is in this sense complementary to the formal learning system, but it is not a remedy for system failures. The power of all youth work lies in its ability to create free spaces for young people (being young together) characterised by emotional safety, a sense of belonging, bonding and bridging, the art of conversation, challenges, friendship and relationships. Different and even contradictory to schools, youth work creates places where young people can build a positive perspective and a hopeful future, believing in themselves and

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19. The only professional youth workers at local level work in 2% of all local youth work initiatives, comprising probably not more than 400 skilled workers. The national level of youth work (first and second line) is highly professionalised, but is estimated to consist of not more than 700 workers, guided by volunteers.

perhaps recovering the motivation to learn, to become active, and to increase their personal social capital. This may not concern in the first place measurable skills, but rather life lessons.

Youth work may help to keep young people away from anti-social behaviour, but this can never be the main raison d'être of youth work. That would be enough to keep young people away from youth work. Youth work is not an instrument to protect the vulnerable, but it must be clear that we cannot raise young people's aspirations without creating perspectives. In this sense youth work may be a scapegoat for frustrations. Youth work is not the solution to the structural problems of an increasingly market-driven society, but it can help us strive for dignity for all.

Under current policies, whatever the level (youth work in most countries has been decentralised to the local level), a tendency may be observed towards neglecting the inevitability of the above-mentioned tensions and dilemmas. An international plea may be heard for a more structured, individualised, professionalised and outcome-focused youth work, especially with regard to vulnerable young people. In that discourse youth work will be increasingly constructed as a transit zone between the private lifeworld and the public system, focusing on individual development and skills, in the naive belief that this individual monitoring of and working on young people will lead to their smooth integration into existing society.

In this perspective, Flanders youth work operates on the front line. The vast majority of (local) youth work can be described as intuitively hostile to demands for utility or instrumentalisation. At the same time, it has to survive the dominant discourse of using all resources – including youth work[20] – for economic activation and adaptation in a neoliberal system. For the more pessimistic prophets, Flemish youth work can be classified as an anachronism close to extinction, soon to be replaced by professional, efficient and smooth concepts suited to multiple purposes. For other observers, the authenticity, autonomy and joie de vivre of Flemish youth work are unbeatable and will survive con brio. Youth work will survive, stubborn and petulant, peevish and cross, generation after generation.

Conclusion: celebrating tensions and diversity

Recent history demonstrates that Flemish youth work has high resilience and a remarkable ability to adapt to changing contexts while conserving its core values. The concepts of being young together and taking on major responsibilities on a voluntary basis has clearly stood the test of time.

The success of youth work emphasises the most important question in social pedagogy: how young people can and may be present in society and shape their own systems. It is not about leading young people into youth work organised for them. Let us cherish the crucial values of youth work because it is youth work as it is, and not because it has proved to be important in constructing a hopeful future. Let us be very careful not to step into the predictable trap, to reverse the value of youth

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20. One can apply this equally to volunteers or voluntary work in general.

work by putting forward all kinds of useful and positive secondary characteristics such as the enhancement of skills, the promotion of different capabilities and the contribution to social capital. Can youth work improve the connections with other dimensions of life? Can youth work repair broken relations, blocked access to education, or lost confidence in society? Of course – but those strong outcomes will vanish at once and completely, when used as arguments to recognise and support youth work. A beautiful paradox, but remembering Plato, that must not lead to despondency, but to resiliency.

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Chapter 3

Youth policy in eastern Europe and the Caucasus

Evgeniia Petrivska[21]

Introduction

The countries of eastern Europe and the Caucasus include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine (hereinafter "the region"). The countries that once shared a history as members of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics now form the largest (in area) partner region of the EU.

Two slogans best describe the youth policies of the region: "Our youth are our future" and "The problems of youth are our first priority". For over 20 years, these countries have been overcoming the mental barrier separating a problem-oriented youth policy from an opportunity development policy, advancing youth into the future despite the issues facing them today.

The youth policy of the countries of the region bears all the hallmarks of a transitional society and requires thorough reform, a new curve. The tendencies in youth policy are specified in state legal documents such as strategies and action plans. Behind this process (on paper), there exists youth policy that is exempt from paternalism characterised by excessive state control over youth. This does not necessarily imply, however, the elimination of the state from youth policy. This depends on the degree of delegation of state administrative functions to youth non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other institutions representing civil society.

From "paper" plans to actions that are not just superficially attractive but also useful for youth that comprise over 20% of the population of each country in this region, real steps should be taken. Almost all these countries can be termed "countries of lawyers": the normative component of youth policy is substantial and, sometimes, overwhelming. However, effective and evidence-based mechanisms of youth policy elaboration, implementation and evaluation, along with indicators, are almost absent. The formation of evidence-based youth policy, closer cross-sectoral co-operation and participation of youth are the three pillars on which the governments seek to

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21. Assistance provided by country experts Giorgi Kakulia (Georgia), Terrence Carp and Alexandru Coica (Moldova).

base common challenges for young people: employment and labour market access, access to higher education and health care.

Youth and youth policies in eastern Europe and the Caucasus: the transition from "Soviet heritage"

In Soviet times, youth work meant complete institutionalisation and state control over everyone. Perhaps these conditions created a "strange" youth policy vocabulary, which international experts still try to change sometimes. Hereinafter in the text, you will come across expressions used by government officials since Soviet times: patriotic upbringing; moral and physical development; activities system; ideological and moral formation, ideological work. Such expressions cannot be adapted to another language. Neither can they be changed, until the mentality of society is changed.

In the Soviet Union, for nearly the whole of the communist period, the age group of youth was the same as that of members of the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League: in the last 30 years it has been defined as age 14 to 28. The effect of the Soviet Law "On general principles of state youth policy" (1991) extended to citizens under the age of 30. Now, in all the countries of eastern Europe and the Caucasus, namely the former republics of the Soviet Union, the youth age group falls between 14 and 35: 16 to 30 years in Armenia, 14 to 29 in Azerbaijan, 14 to 31 in Belarus, 14 to 29 in Georgia, 16 to 30 in Moldova, 14 to 30 in Russia, and 14 to 35 in Ukraine.

It should be emphasised that heated debates took place regarding the definition of "age limits" in the region. The issue was basically resolved politically, not scientifically. This approach can largely be explained by the fact that the wider the spacing between the lower and upper age limits, the larger the proportion of the population that falls into the category of "youth". Correspondingly, a greater amount of funds must be allocated by the state for loans and benefits, as well as for special measures fitting into the concept of "youth policy". In this sense, youth became more expensive for society and the state. A lack of money forced the scientific problem of the age limit, in some countries, to be resolved politically: the number of young people in society would thus correspond to the amount of money the state had.

The formation of state youth policy in the region is based on traditions established in the former Soviet Union. In the USSR, there were three attempts to draft a youth law to form youth policy. However, only the last attempt ended with the adoption of the Law "On general principles of state youth policy" in 1991. The ideas of this law became fundamental for the development of the legal framework in several countries of eastern Europe: among the first "youth laws" were adopted in Belarus and Ukraine in 1992. The connection to the past (pre-independence) can be observed in the importance of the "youth" age group to society: in 1958 the Day of Soviet Youth was established, which was celebrated on the last Sunday of June. Today, in Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Ukraine and Russia a national youth day is celebrated, during which so-called offers, exhibitions and races are organised.

It must be emphasised that apart from the basic laws that determine the development of state youth policy in eastern Europe and the Caucasus, there are also a number of other legislative and regulatory acts aimed at implementation. This refers

to specialised programmes developed in each country that are in fact a combination of a state youth strategy (since they contain short-term priorities) and an action plan for a certain period, for example, the state programme Youth of Belarus 2006-2016 and the state programme Youth of Ukraine 2009-2015.

Who are the young people of eastern Europe and the Caucasus? As of 2014, in eastern European countries and the Caucasus, the number of young people as a proportion of the total population was 25.7% in Armenia, 31.4% in Azerbaijan, 23.7% in Belarus, 22.5% in Georgia, 25.3% in Moldova, 30% in Ukraine and 23.15% in Russia.[22]

The biggest challenge for the youth of the region today, as well as in the central European countries, is labour market access. The share of the labour force taken up by young people aged 15 to 24 who are available for and are seeking employment, according to the World Bank in 2013, is 16.2% in Armenia, 5.5% in Azerbaijan, 5.8% in Belarus, 14.3% in Georgia, 5.1% in Moldova, 7.9% in Ukraine and 5.6% in Russia.[23]

Some experts and policy makers tend to emphasise the psychological characteristics of the youth of the region, citing a prevailing mood of uncertainty about the future, powerlessness and social exclusion that results in a passive attitude to life. A number of young people lack the necessary competences for taking personal or social decisions. Other young people lose motivation in developing their own interests and abilities. In this context, social passivity becomes a national problem, as young people do not seek external help. Undoubtedly, each country has its own political and historical realities – they all are different. However, the challenges that are faced by young people and state youth policy implementation mechanisms are very similar.

Eastern Europe and the Caucasus: an insider's look at youth policy

Armenia

The authorised state body which aims at the development and implementation of state youth policy in Armenia is the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of the Republic of Armenia (created in 2007). Since 2004, there have been government officials responsible for youth in every regional administration.

The decree "Concept of the State Youth Policy" (1998) was approved by the Armenian Government. One of the basic principles of the concept is "to ensure the participation of young people in the development and implementation of policies and specific programmes relating to youth and society in general".

Young Armenians face a number of problems: unemployment, accessibility to services, and social exclusion of those with disabilities, refugees and forced migrants. Poverty rates are slightly higher in rural than in urban areas like the capital Yerevan, but the highest rates are recorded in urban areas outside the capital. The lowest poverty rate has been reported for Yerevan, reflecting its economic development.

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22. Data from http://eapyouth.eu, accessed 5 March 2017.
23. Data from www.youthpolicy.org/factsheets, accessed 5 March 2017.

The most important issue mentioned by youth all over Armenia is unemployment (the highest in the region we are studying), which is particularly high for youth from rural areas without higher education. This is the priority for several ministries, local governments and other institutions, and there is a need for collaboration with the private sector and civil society sector.

Currently, the 2013-17 Strategy for the State Youth Policy of the Republic of Armenia focuses on youth inclusion in political, economic and cultural life; youth employment as well as social and economic issues; youth health and healthy lifestyles; development of spiritual and cultural values; military-patriotic upbringing; and access to formal and non-formal education. As the acting strategy comes to an end the new one for the period 2018-2022 is being drafted by the working group, which includes representatives from different sectors of youth policy, youth work and youth research.

Cross-sectoral co-operation on youth issues in Armenia is carried out through the drafting and adoption of laws and regulatory legal acts. For example, during the development of the youth policy strategy, inter-agency working groups consisting of representatives of both the executive authorities and local and international NGOs were formed. The working groups developing other acts such as the state programme Affordable Housing for Young Families, and Youth Capital of the Year, operate in the same way. One of the components of cross-sectoral co-operation is the Council of the National Youth Policy under the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia Council of the Youth Policy, headed by the Prime Minister of the Republic of Armenia. This consists of the representatives of state agencies and public youth organisations, and aims to ensure the effective participation of youth and youth organisations in the decision-making process and youth policy implementation.

Every year the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs provides support to youth organisations through an online system of grants. The system works in the following way: an NGO registers with the system, and then applies for a grant according to specified requirements and deadlines. Experts (who must be registered with the system) evaluate the projects. All projects and reports are submitted online only. Despite a democratically prescribed procedure for online submission of grants, many young people complain about governmental bias and the prejudice of experts who evaluate the projects.

Many youth-oriented programmes are designed by the government and the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs. However, the participation of (especially rural) youth in their development and in terms of access to the programme is questionable. Major programmes for youth in Armenia include Available Housing for Young People and Youth Capital of the Year.

There is a national youth council in Armenia, but its operation is not transparent. Generally, young people can participate in youth programmes if they are involved in state-controlled bodies. There are also some big organisations conducting research on youth in order to base their activities on the needs of target groups.

Azerbaijan

The Ministry of Youth and Sport of the Republic of Azerbaijan (created in 1994) is the central executive body that carries out state policy and regulation in the field of youth policy. At the regional level, youth policy is within the competence of local authorities.

The problem of youth unemployment is defined as one of the priorities of the Ministry of Youth and Sport. In recent years, it has regularly organised employment fairs, which involve hundreds of companies. Subsequently, thousands of young people are employed. In 2008, with the support of the Ministry and the International Labour Organization, the Career Centre was founded in the Azerbaijan State University of Economics, one of the leading universities in the country. One of the most important factors in ranking the university, its faculties and chairs is the employment level of graduates.

Azerbaijan has adopted the Law on Youth Policy (2002), the state programme Azerbaijani Youth in 2011-2015, the Development Strategy of Azerbaijani Youth for 2015-2025, and other state programmes (education abroad and supporting young families, support for children and youth without parental care, support of talented youth, etc.).

The country has also developed cross-sectoral co-operation on youth issues. State co-operation at the national and local levels is implemented under the umbrella of cross-sectoral co-operation among state structures, ministries, committees, municipalities and local youth offices. In this regard, working groups are created to implement appropriate activities and state programmes in the field of youth policy. The Inter-agency Commission on Youth includes representatives of all the agencies.

The state programme Azerbaijani Youth in 2015-2025 and Action Plan for the period 2015-2010 address the most pressing issues facing young people. One such issue is housing for youth, and within the framework of the state programme, the Azerbaijan Mortgage Fund allocates concessional (social) loans for young families.

In 2011, the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the establishment of a Youth Fund under the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Azerbaijan was passed. The main objective of the Youth Fund is to finance projects and programmes of public and social importance in the field of education, science, culture and other areas related to youth policy, including projects and programmes implemented internationally. Youth organisations and individuals have the right to appeal to the Youth Fund to receive a grant for their projects. In order to receive a grant, the applicant (youth organisation or individual) must complete an online application (in a particular category) on the Youth Fund's website, and provide necessary documents related to the organisation or individual. The categories that can be funded are the following: local pilot projects, international projects, activities carried out in other countries where Azerbaijani youth can participate, grants for international events organised abroad, and research projects of foreign citizens in Azerbaijan.

Since 2006, appropriate steps have been taken for the construction of the Youth House in Baku and Youth Centres in the regions. There were 39 Youth Centres in the regions by the end of 2016. Within the framework of the socio-economic development of Baku and surrounding suburbs, projects have been approved for the construction of youth houses in districts of the capital. Fifteen are expected to be finished within the next few years.

At present, there are more than 200 youth organisations in the country. The issues they cover are the patriotic spirit of young people in education, awareness, reduction of unemployment, health, education, civic participation, and the promotion of culture among the masses. The representative body of youth is the National Assembly of Youth Organisations of Azerbaijan, which unites 129 member organisations.

Belarus

The concept of state youth policy is defined in Belarus by the Law "On the principles of the state youth policy" (2009). This delineates a state system of social, economic, political, organisational, legislative and other activities directed at providing support to young citizens in order to ensure their social development, and realisation of their potential to the fullest extent possible to the benefit of society as a whole.

At the state level, youth policy is co-ordinated by the Department of Youth Affairs of the Ministry of Education, which was established in May 2004. The country has an extensive network of local branches of state structures working with youth. Youth policy is recognised as one of the most important areas of state activity and is a separate field of social policy. Apart from what is laid out by the Constitution of Belarus, youth policy is based on the Law "On the principles of the state youth policy" (2009), presidential decrees and decrees of the Council of Ministers, including the Decree of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus "On a set of measures for the implementation of the state youth policy" (2011). The documents of the Ministry of Education, the youth committee and others are also relevant, and an action plan in the field of youth policy, the "Set of measures for the implementation of state youth policy", is annually implemented. There have been recent developments in state youth policy: the "Youth Policy" sub-programme and its Action Plan within the "Education and Youth Policy" state programme for 2016-2020 has been adopted by the Resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus (2016).

The state's youth policy priorities include promotion and support of a civic and patriotic upbringing, a healthy lifestyle, the right to work, the right of youth to associate, education, talented youth, young families, socially significant initiatives of youth, and international youth co-operation.

The state also supports the development of ideas among youth (according to national priorities). Currently, the 100 Ideas for Belarus project is quite popular. The project has helped to unite youth, stir up scientific and innovative activities by youth, and create a databank of ideas and perspectives on scientific and technical youth developments, which could bring benefits to separate branches of the economy, in particular communities and enterprises, but also to the country as a whole.

Much attention is paid to the youth employment level in the country. To begin with, there is even a tax on parasitism. Young people are employed through the implementation of the annual State Population Employment Programme of Belarus. This subsidises employers for organising workplaces for graduates' temporary employment; those who are employed in organisations and enterprises on a contract basis; and those who assist graduates to find employment. It subsidises as well the training of persons under the age of 21, the unemployed, and those with a profession, at the age of conscription to the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus, etc. The country strongly supports the creation of school business companies, business incubators, and youth business schools.

Belarus is unique in terms of its total control of every step that even precedes contact with a young person. An important term to remember is "ideological work". This refers to the social services area, which is regarded as a mandatory component of the educational process in public educational institutions and covers all students, regardless of their social background, religion or nationality. At the heart of the educational process is the creation of conditions for the development of personality, its ideological and moral formation, progress towards self-determination, and a partnership between the teacher and pupil in jointly meeting the challenges of the development of an individual. The notion of a patriotic upbringing is implemented through the process of youth inclusion in active creative work in the interest of the Motherland.

The only national youth council that is supported by the government is the Belarusian Republican Youth Union, which reaches across the country with a membership of more than 474 000 members (2014). Outside the territory of Belarus, Belarusian National Youth Council "RADA" positions itself as an alternative to the BRYU. Established in 1997, RADA was closed in 2006 by a court decision, and currently exists as an underground organisation.

It should be noted that one can criticise the ideological control exercised by the state, but of all the countries in the region, it is in Belarus that the highest percentage of youth is aware of government actions regarding youth issues, and is involved in social processes.

Georgia

The Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia (created in 2010) is the main body implementing youth policy in the country. Its main functions are to define youth policy, create its own state programme for youth and co-ordinate the effective management of youth affairs in the state sector.

As in Armenia, Moldova and Ukraine, the focus in society is on migration, internally displaced persons and temporarily occupied territories. The main challenges for Georgian youth are employment, specifically the mismatch between acquired skills and labour market needs as well as, in rural areas, social exclusion. An analysis of the main problems of youth in Georgia reveals that they are located in several

"dimensions" and primarily connected to the realisation of human rights, civil rights and social rights.[24]

State youth policy in the country is based on legislation in the following areas: public participation; education, work and mobility; health care; reporting; and special support and protection. Strategic directions for youth policy correspond to these areas.

The new national youth policy adopted by the Government of Georgia in 2014 is expected to make youth a development priority for the country. The policy recognises – and commits to meeting – young people's needs for education, sexual and reproductive health services, employment, and participation in decision making. For effective implementation of the national youth policy's goals and objectives, it is vitally important that the resources, services and programmes envisioned be focused on children from the time they reach school-going age.

In 2015, the Youth Policy Action Plan was approved for the period 2015 to 2020. The action plan envisages the implementation of more than 200 projects, in particular addressing equal and inclusive participation of young people with special needs, and the set-up of infrastructure and an adapted environment that will ensure maximum inclusion of vulnerable youth.

A considerable number of state programmes for youth exist, addressing a range of youth needs: the Programme for Popularization of Healthy Lifestyle and Involvement of Youth in Cultural Life, Students Self-Government Support Programme, Integration Programme for Young People with Disabilities, Georgian Youth Ambassador Programme, Re-socialisation programme for Juveniles, etc. However, the question of the real involvement of diverse layers of youth in the development of these programmes takes us back to pre-independence times: the government still knows best what youth should do. When the national youth policy was in its development phase, young people were invited to participate through workshops, forums, meetings and conferences attended by other stakeholders as well. However, this was a one-off measure, and did not become a permanent mechanism.

The National Council of Youth Organisations of Georgia was set up in 1995, and there are a considerable number of youth organisations at regional level and in small towns. Insufficient financial resources for operations and poor communication with donor and international organisations acting in Georgia are among the most pressing problems these organisations face. They also struggle with low skill levels in organisational management, project preparation, international operations, lobbying and advocacy, event planning and interactions with other sectors, as well as a low level of participation in national policy planning and implementation.

The majority of developed states have policies covering youth organisations. The state takes into account the fact that the activity of a youth organisation is, perhaps, the responsibility of young people. Without this kind of job experience, their qualification and skills may not be sufficient for effective and full-fledged public service. A large proportion of youth organisations in Georgia, however, do not fully use the resources available at the international level.

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24. Available at: www.euneighbours.eu/en/east/stay-informed/news/eastern-partnership-youth-policy-report-has-been-published.

Moldova

The institutionalisation of youth policy began in Moldova in 2001 with the Departments of Youth and Sports at the Central Public Administration. From 2005 to 2007, youth strategy was the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. A highlight of this period was the adoption of the first Grant Programmes for Youth and the first Regulations on Youth Centres and Youth Councils. From 2007 to 2009, the Ministry of Education and Youth was responsible for youth policy in Moldova. Since 2009, the Ministry of Youth and Sports has been responsible for the elaboration and implementation of state youth policy.

The priority areas of youth policy are youth employment and, consequently, the return of young emigrants. Youth migration has been encouraged by the country's geographical location and its historic alliance with Romania. As a result, more than half of Moldovan youth possess a Romanian passport as well as a national passport, opening the borders to unrestricted employment outside Moldova.

The Ministry of Youth and Sport develops and implements youth policy pursuant to the National Youth Strategy for 2014-2020. The strategy has four priority areas: youth participation, services for youth, economic opportunities for youth, and youth sector consolidation/strengthening institutional capacity. These areas are prioritised through relevant programmes and activities (e.g. the First Youth Gala, volunteering festivals, career festivals).

The Ministry of Youth and Sports was the first public authority to award grants to youth organisations through yearly public calls based on specific yearly priorities. The grants' priorities are usually linked to the action plans of the youth strategy, thus contributing to its implementation. In this sense, youth organisations play an active role within the implementation of adopted youth policies.

The College of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, the highest consultative body apart from the minister, includes representatives of the youth sector. A co-management body has been created in charge of the overall co-ordination of cross-sectoral youth policy implementation.

Moldova has an extensive network of local youth centres: during 2007 and 2008, 60 centres were created. In 2013, the country had over 400 Local Youth Councils, up from about 100 in 2010. There are also Youth Friendly Health Centres in cities across the country. There is a national youth council in Moldova (created in 1999). One of the largest youth organisations is the Students Alliance of Moldova. However, in all these years there have been few initiatives to create similar organisations (for political reasons).

Best practices in Moldova include the invitation of individual youth experts and/or representatives of youth organisations to a working group during the development of youth policy documents. The latest example is a working group developing a new law on youth. Due to Moldova's particular national environment, some youth organisations (and organisations that promote services for young people) have developed a good capacity to formulate and advocate for different youth policies. In addition, some central public authorities have been quite responsive to constructive

initiatives of civil society. The law on volunteering that was initiated and promoted by a group of youth organisations, taken over by the Ministry of Youth and Sports and adopted by the Moldovan Parliament may also serve as a recent example in this sense. Another good example may be the Law on Equality of Chances, which was initiated by civil society (including an important number of youth NGOs).

Russian Federation

State youth policy in the Russian Federation is implemented by the Ministry of Education and Science; before 2012, the responsibility belonged to the Ministry of Sports, Tourism and Youth Policy. The priorities of state youth policy in the medium term are defined in the following federal documents: the Concept of Long-Term Social and Economic Development until 2020 (from 2008), the Strategy of State Youth Policy until 2016 (2006), and the Principles of State Youth Policy of the Russian Federation until 2025 (2014).

Russian youth face three types of issues: increasing globalisation and competition; growing cultural diversity and the need to find ways to increase tolerance and positive socialisation; and a lack of inclusion in the activities of political institutions. The development and implementation of state youth policy is carried out at federal and regional levels. The Government of the Russian Federation approves implementation measures of youth policy.

In 2014, an Inter-Agency Council for Youth Affairs was created under the Governmental Commission on Compatriots Living Abroad. The main task of the Council is to co-ordinate the interaction of executive authorities in developing common approaches and strategies implementing state policy for young Russians living abroad. The working group of the Council for Youth Affairs includes the representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, the federal agencies Rosmolodezh and Rossotrudnichestvo, federal universities, public funds, etc.

In Russia, the level of education and youth employment is rather high compared to that in other countries in eastern Europe and the Caucasus. However, both in the areas of education and employment, there exists high inter-regional differentiation. This reflects the inequality of social and economic development within the Russian Federation, which results in unequal access for young people to high-quality education and, ultimately, a decrease in the human capital assets level and competitiveness of the region.

One of the pressing problems of youth policy in Russia is creating proper conditions for youth inclusion in different social practices. Furthermore, much attention is paid to personal development and acquiring various competences – professional and personal – and the development of values such as tolerance and mutual respect.

The social advancement of youth is one of the initiatives of the President of Russia. Examples are educational forums like Seliger and the All-Caucasus Youth Forum Mashuk, held under the patronage of state representatives in the federal districts. These are the main ideological platforms for youth work.

One of the key priorities for the country is the formulation of the local youth strategies and action plans aiming to support social advancement and adjust local youth policy to the pan-Russian practice.

The Russian President aims to create a network of "service platforms" in the country to provide maximum support for youth development, helping young people navigate opportunities already existing in the country and creating new ones. One such platform is the Federal Agency for Youth Affairs (Rosmolodezh) – the only relevant national public authority whose activities are entirely focused on youth development. Among the main priorities of Rosmolodezh are youth inclusion in the process of innovation development by supporting talented youth and helping them fulfil their potential; the social support of youth initiatives, encouraging entrepreneurship; assistance in youth social adaptation in difficult situations; and the education of youth inspired by morality, patriotism and resistance.

The Association of Non-Governmental Organizations "National Youth Council of Russia" was created in 1992 and is in active operation. There are many youth and children organisations registered in the country. But it is difficult to register youth NGOs in Russia. The procedures are too complicated for most young people. However, now it is more feasible to register a private business than an NGO. There is no mechanism for youth funding, but youth NGOs can participate in state tenders and apply for presidential grants just like any other NGO. In general, young people have more opportunities to participate on the local level, but this can depend on the financial resources of the regions.

Ukraine

The priorities of youth policy in Ukraine were set when it gained its independence, and the basic laws and regulations for youth work were adopted: the Declaration on General Principles of State Youth Policy in Ukraine, the Law on State Youth Policy, etc. Today the country has more than 700 laws and 800 subordinate regulatory legal acts concerning youth. The Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine (created in 1991), also overseeing an extensive structure including bodies at local level, develops and implements youth state policy.

Since 1998, the country has implemented the "Youth of Ukraine" State Target Social Programme, which in fact is a short-term strategy (six years on average) and an action plan at the same time. To ensure the effective implementation of the "Youth of Ukraine" tasks, a series of indicators in a number of conducted activities have been proposed. However, the justification for such indicators, as well as the mechanism of youth inclusion in developing the programme, were not presented.

Though the youth action plan has existed for many years, the Strategy for the State Youth Policy Development appeared only in 2013. The priorities of the strategy address the biggest challenges for modern youth: encouraging a patriotic upbringing, accessible education, a healthy lifestyle, employment and affordable housing. It should be noted that the State Target Social Programme "Youth of Ukraine" for the period 2016 to 2020 is based on the strategy and adds to its priorities the problems faced by internally displaced persons. Indeed the current "Youth of Ukraine" State

Target Social Programme remains "paternalistic" and problem-oriented despite the recommendations received from the Council of Europe international review team to switch to the open-development model of supporting young people.

Experts have characterised state youth policy of the last five years as simplistic, unsystematic and even indeterminate. Each of the state entities responsible for public policy – and there are very many – has a separate programme and its own vision of how to solve youth problems. For example, the Ministry of Youth and Sports and its structures, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Social Policy, local communities, and the health authorities are all involved in youth policy. The absence of clearly stated mechanisms for inter-agency co-operation on youth issues and, therefore, specific examples of co-operation in recent years, should be emphasised.

Every year, the Ministry of Youth and Sports provides funding on a competitive basis to all-Ukrainian (national) NGOs to implement youth programmes. For local organisations, the competition for funding is held at local level. The country also allocates president's grants and the Cabinet of Ministers Award for gifted youth. As in many post-Soviet countries, the public considers the mechanisms of tenders to be obsolete and decorative.

Ukraine has about 300 officially registered national youth organisations (more than 20% of which are the youth wings of political parties, or those who are loyal to them). More than 5 000 youth organisations are registered locally. The national association of youth organisations, or unions, should be mentioned in this respect, as 19 are registered. Currently, the Ukrainian Youth Forum and the National Youth Council of Ukraine are locked in a fierce struggle for the representation of an internationally co-ordinated youth movement.

Despite the large number of youth organisations in the country, the percentage of youth members is incomparably small (2%) as a proportion of the youth population.[25] However, the role of youth in society has been significant and inspiring; youth has been a key factor in the modern political transformations of Ukraine.

Reflections and conclusions

Research on youth policy history in eastern Europe and the Caucasus is challenging. Statistics and background information received from eastern Europe and the Caucasus countries do not always contain comprehensive and clear data.

Following the recommendations of international experts to some extent, some countries have tried to limit themselves to general changes in the description of state youth policy, while their implementation methods remain unchanged since the Soviet era.

The countries have no real evidentiary base of best practices and tested mechanisms, approaches, and projects on youth issues. There is a lack of co-ordination among projects and exchange with international organisations. Youth policy in the region is still problem-oriented.

25. Available at: http://dsmsu.gov.ua/media/2015/12/09/5/Molod_Ukraine_block.pdf.

Today, the young people of the region are experiencing a complex process of modernisation affecting educational systems, personnel training, the labour market and housing. They face a number of health issues (ranging from physical and psychological conditions, as well as sexual health), for which there are no reliable youth policies and inter-agency mechanisms apart from separate pilot initiatives.

Issues related to ensuring the development and implementation of youth state policy in five out of seven countries in the region fall within the responsibility of a separate ministry, which combines management issues of both youth and sports. Youth policy is related to education in two countries (in the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation). Such bodies develop the fundamental principles for strategies and action plans for youth for specified periods. However, the portfolio of at least three regulatory bodies of each country includes cross-cutting issues of youth, namely the ministries of social policy/labour; education; and health care. Therefore, the elaboration of inter-agency co-operation guidelines is key. It is important to identify which ministry is responsible for a particular aspect of the social and economic well-being and development of youth and, more importantly, this should not be pro forma, but for tangible results.

The biggest challenge for the states in managing the youth sector is the co-ordination of the activities of stakeholders. The youth sector includes the ministry holding the youth portfolio, the relevant parliamentary committee, state and local self-governance bodies and agencies directly related to youth, youth NGOs and councils, students and school self-governance mechanisms, the international community, donor organisations and diplomatic corps, and mass media.

In these states, the authorities implement state youth policy in co-operation with NGOs for youth and children. International organisations are extensively involved in the elaboration of youth issues. Their involvement is not limited to funding activities. Expert assistance is an important contribution in kind, primarily because of the lack of human capacity in government bodies. In all the countries, the state provides support to youth and children's organisations from the state and local budget through grants on a competitive basis. They all also have a national youth union, but in most cases such unions do not even partly represent youth and youth movements.

Despite the large number of registered youth organisations and associations, the presence of national youth councils (in some countries, very formal), and despite the public rhetoric about youth participation in the region, there is a lack of confidence both in official institutions and in NGOs, as was the case before. This is probably a legacy of communism, which prevents the expansion of youth participation. In fact, youth work in the countries of the region is done at the local level: the farther from the city one gets, the more one finds specific actions for youth undertaken through the efforts of local communities. In the capital cities, we can discuss the youth policy of ambitious individual citizens, but at the level of towns and villages, the matter concerns work with every young person, though initiatives are limited by a lack of financial support.

Youth policy in the region is implemented within certain areas (e.g. education, social welfare, sports, and affordable housing for youth as part of national projects). An important aspect of youth policy should be, but has not yet become, attention

to marginalised youth. The presence of rooted social stereotypes and limited opportunities for participation create obstacles to attracting marginal groups of youth (individuals without permanent residence, illegal migrants, former prisoners, etc.). Having no documents and registration, these young people have no opportunity to get an education, find a job legally, solve their housing issues, obtain a legal income, and access social assistance, health care and social services, not to mention realise their political rights. The result is the prevalence of apathy and a loss of desire to defend their rights.

A positive sign for youth, which is typical to modern society, is the desire of governments to support and develop youth-friendly institutions. Government representatives have begun to consider youth opinions and needs. Today, they pay more attention to the support of solidarity and tolerance among nations, to combating xenophobia, and to involving young people in the dialogue between cultures and religions. This includes improving the integration of migrants, which is particularly relevant for all countries in eastern Europe and the Caucasus, with their multi-ethnic populations.

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Chapter 4

Saying, doing, relating – Reflecting on youth work praxis in Finland

Tomi Kiilakoski

Introduction

Youth work as a social praxis is shaped by existing ways of doing things, by the way people understand the practices and by the material and cultural conditions under which youth workers are operating. According to a theory of practice architectures (Kemmis et al. 2014), all practices are affected by the set of cultural-discursive preconditions, material-economic preconditions and social-political preconditions that exist. Like any other practice, youth work is shaped by "the densely interwoven patterns of saying, doing and relating that enable and constrain each new interaction, giving familiar practices their characteristic shapes" (Kemmis 2009: 466). To understand the Finnish variant of youth work one needs to pay attention to all of the above preconditions. Understandings, practices and the conditions of practice shape and are shaped by each other. Therefore thinking about youth work as a practice requires looking at how researchers, legislators and workers themselves conceptualise their work, what youth work actually does and how youth work is shaped by the political and social conditions. I will analyse these dimensions in the Finnish context using the concepts of saying, doing and relating as inherited from the theory of praxis formulated by Stephen Kemmis.

I will start by examining the social-political conditions of youth work, followed by the cultural-discursive conditions of youth work in Finland. I will then proceed to describe the "doing" dimension of youth work by looking at the issue of working with individuals and groups. Lastly, some recent efforts to reconceptualise youth work are presented. These dimensions of youth work praxis are all relevant in understanding how the Finnish variant of youth work operates as a universal service, as a pedagogical activity, and as a group-oriented practice based on voluntary consent of the young participants, aiming at both integrating young people into society and helping them to express their opinions, even if they contradict the status quo.

Relating and contextualising:
socio-political structures of youth work in Finland

Youth work in Finland is shaped by the ideals of the welfare state. The welfare model of Finland draws on the basic idea of the Nordic welfare state, with relatively high levels of welfare spending, a high degree of equality and an extensive public sector. Different professional cultures in general have strong autonomy in Nordic welfare societies. Depending on what one emphasises, youth work in Finland can be regarded as rather strong or relatively weak as a profession. Youth work has clear professional structures in place. There has been national legislation governing youth work since 1972, when the first act on youth affairs was passed. At the time of writing this article, the Youth Act (passed in 2006; a new Youth Act was passed in 2017)[26] defined youth work as "promotion of active citizenship in young people's leisure time, the empowerment of young people, support to their growth and independence, and interaction between generations". This definition puts emphasis on the pedagogical and democratic nature of youth work.

There is tertiary education in youth work at universities and applied universities. In addition, there is a growing body of scientific literature on youth work, mostly written in Finnish and accessible to youth workers. An ethical code of youth work was prepared in 2013 in collaboration with different agents in the youth field (including practitioners and managers of youth work, education and research). According to the code, youth work is about supporting the agency of the young as individuals and as a group, promoting growth and enabling the participation of youth in their immediate surroundings and in society (*Ammattieettinen ohjeistus*).

Youth work is seen as one of the services the public sector has to provide for. It is regarded as a separate and independent professional tradition, distinct from both the formal learning system and social work. Youth work is financed both by the state and local governments. Municipalities are important providers of youth work (currently rough estimation states that 3 400 people are employed as professional youth workers). Parishes and NGOs also organise youth work services (Kivijärvi and Heino 2013). Legislation also requires municipalities to offer different youth work services, in addition to being required to co-ordinate different youth services within a youth policy framework. The concept of youth work as a general welfare service intended for all young people has been an important part of professional youth work in Finland (Siurala 2012: 107).

In contrast to these signs of professionalism there are also indications that youth work is not a strong profession. The ethos and theoretical basis of youth work is somewhat ambiguous, just as the public perception and knowledge of youth work is unclear. There is no consensus on the theoretical framework of youth work. Historically, youth work has been defined in many ways. Using a historical analysis it can be claimed that "there is no unambiguous or generally accepted concept of youth work in Finland" (Nieminen 2012: 72). Youth work has seen many configurations, and the relations to youth care or youth activities are vague (Nieminen 1995). Even the professional

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26. Youth Act (72/2006), Unofficial translation, was available (15 September 2016) at www.minedu.fi/ OPM/Nuoriso/lait_ja_saeaedoekset/index.html?lang=en.

vocabulary is in some cases insufficient (Forkby and Kiilakoski 2014). In contrast to, for example, social work, the profession itself has no control over the qualifications of youth workers.

The professional structures described above affect how youth workers are able to relate to other youth workers, to other professions, to young people and to the community in general. They are legitimate agents, they have professional qualifications and they are seen as part of a profession. This means that they can operate freely as a recognised part of the welfare system in Finland.

Discourse on youth work policy in Finland

Cultural-discursive preconditions affect how the youth worker is talked and thought about. Within these preconditions certain concepts become dominant ways of expressing how the profession sees itself and how it is governed. The concepts of growth, the growth environment and education have been used in the history of youth policy in Finland to describe the essence of youth work. For example, when the management of youth work was organised at the state level after the Second World War, it was felt that youth work was mainly about education. Therefore, it was believed, it should be located within the Ministry of Education of Finland. In contrast to this, youth care was part of the Ministry of Social Affairs. Even the youth organisations of political parties have been seen as educational organisations. This implies that youth work is seen as being about education and supporting growth (Nieminen 1995: 219, 394-5). This historical view is still manifest today.

There have been academic dissertations analysing youth work as youth education (Purjo 2011), and also scientific monographs theorising youth work as education (Nivala and Saastamoinen 2007; Kiilakoski, Kinnunen and Djupsund 2015). Also, youth workers graduating from applied universities from the "civic activities and youth programme" are called community pedagogues (*yhteisöpedagogi*). This conception of youth work as education emphasises that youth work as voluntary and leisure time-oriented practice differs from the formal educational system, both in methodology and aims. In this way of looking at things, education differs from one-sided socialisation: youth work as education is about equipping the young with the dispositions, capabilities and volition to both adapt to and renew society.

The view about youth work as education is shared by a large majority of youth workers in Finland. A recent study from Allianssi found that 90% of municipal youth workers think that education is part of the role of youth work, and its ethical code of youth work talks about youth work as education and as supporting the growth of the young. The Youth Act aims at supporting "young people's growth and independence". Despite the popularity of the language of youth work as non-formal learning in European youth policy, this discourse has not yet affected the vocabulary of youth work in Finland significantly.

Recently, there has also been a growing interest in the co-operation of basic formal education and youth work. This requires negotiating their different professional roles. According to research, youth work is able to contribute to the learning environments of school by cultivating the group dynamics, by promoting participation

of the young and by encouraging the different generations working in schools to reconfigure their relationships (Kiilakoski 2014). The growing interest of combining schools and youth work suggests that they share general ideas (e.g. supporting growth, promoting learning), but they also retain differences in ethos and methodologies. In youth work the emphasis is on doing, not on decontextualised reading; on being with other people, not on learning as an isolated individual; on doing something fun and being motivated in doing so. Understanding the importance of youth cultures (such as gaming cultures, and alternative sports like parkour or skating) and utilising them to create learning environments is one the key strengths of youth work, which also distinguishes it from social work or formal education.

Despite the differences in the concepts used, the conception of youth work as an agent to provide support to growth, help with transitions to the education system or labour markets, enhance capacity building, and contribute to the development of young people is shared. Youth work does not concentrate on the cognitive level in learning, it is about social learning. The goals of youth work are not pre-set, nor are the learning results generally evaluated. These features characterise the Finnish interpretation of youth work as concentrating mainly on leisure-time activities with an emphasis on supporting the development and growth of young people (Kiilakoski, Kinnunen and Djupsund 2015).

Saying and doing: Finnish youth work, integration and participation

Social integration remains an important goal of youth work, which cherishes the values of solidarity and equality and seeks to combat marginalisation. The essential aim of youth work in Finland is to create supportive peer groups to enhance both participation and empowerment of the young (Kivijärvi and Heino 2013: 225-6). Integration into wider society can mean finding a career path in education or some other sector, but it can also mean learning the skills and dispositions needed to influence decision making in civil society and in politics.

One of the key concepts used in Finnish youth work is that of participation. An interest in promoting active citizenship and participation has been one of the goals of youth policy in Finland, although youth studies show that this may not be as important to the young (Nieminen 2014). Theoretically, participation combines two elements. Participation has a social dimension. Promoting social participation means helping communities to evolve, ensuring that everybody has friends and nurturing a feeling of belonging as an appreciated member of a group or a community. Participation also has a political element. Promoting political participation means making sure that young people have information and can access the decision-making structures, redistributing power relations between adults and younger generations and helping young people use their voice and express their opinions. Examples of the first dimension can include contributing to group dynamics in schools and engaging in community work, whereas examples of the latter include organising hearings or working with representational groups such as youth councils (Gretschel and Kiilakoski 2012).

One of the missions of youth work in Nordic societies is to contribute to the development of youth citizenship, thus promoting democracy (Forkby and Kiilakoski 2014). An example is municipal youth councils, which are mandatory in Finland. They are mostly organised by municipal youth workers and usually have formal connections to local government. The concept and practices of participation in youth policy in Finland have been critiqued for being too close to existing representational structures instead of helping young people to express their political opinions through new and imaginative channels (Siurala 2015). These include art-based methods and open forums using cultural expressions of the youth, such as the "Voice of the young" editorial team in Helsinki, which produces news in co-operation with the traditional media. From a critical perspective, it can be asked if the emphasis of Finnish youth work is too much on integration (helping young people change so that they can cope with society) and too little on creating critical awareness (helping society to change so it can better meet the needs and demands of the young) (Kiilakoski 2014: 166-9). The perspectives of radical youth work are almost absent in Finland and usually youth workers do not engage in openly political projects with young people when it comes to, for example, tackling social inequalities and problems.

Practice and doing:
working with groups and individuals in the Finnish context

One of the common themes in the Finnish history of youth work has been working with different groups of young people. The emphasis has been on activities such as summer camps, hobby groups and youth centre activities, organised in groups of manageable size (Nieminen 1995). Young people often join these groups on a voluntary basis, normally in their leisure time (Kivijärvi 2015). Understanding the impact of peer relations and using this as a pedagogical tool has been a professional feature of youth work. In an ongoing study, Tommi Hoikkala has stated that a sense of group dynamics and the importance of peer relations in the social worlds of young people is one of the distinctive features of Finnish youth work.[27]

Historically, group methods have been a dominant form of youth work, and are sometimes seen as an element defining youth work in Finland (Nieminen 2014). The centrality of group methodologies has at least two dimensions. Firstly, supporting peer relations is seen as an integral part of youth work. Ensuring that everybody has friends and is able to take part in a group is one of the aims of youth work per se (Kiilakoski, Kinnunen and Djupsund 2015). Secondly, there is a conviction that working in groups will result in peer learning and contribute to the well-being of the young (Siurala 2012).

These groups for youth work can be formed by the young people themselves or they can be chosen to be part of a group because adult society thinks that some young people are in need of support. In the universalistic ideology of the welfare state, targeted measures are often associated with the risk of imposing stigmas. Therefore youth work prefers to keep many of its services open. There are, however, different gender-based groups, groups for migrant youth or, for example, for sexual minorities. A dissertation on multicultural youth work emphasises the importance

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27. Personal e-mail, 26 October 2015.

of self-organised and pre-chosen groups, which demonstrates how youth work in Finland differs from social work where more work is done with individuals (Kivijärvi 2015). Part of the ethos of youth work is seeing young people as members of different groups, networks and (youth) cultures, and not only as individuals. Personal and social learning are important.

Although historically group methods have been a central part of the methodological toolkit of youth work, recently there has been a growing emphasis on working with individuals. This is especially true of outreach youth work done with young people outside of education or the labour market, and different methods of working with individuals are being used, such as counselling. In her study of Finnish outreach youth work, Puuronen (2014) has emphasised that this form of youth work is based on a non-hierarchical professional dialogue between the youth worker and an individual young person. While a loose set of shared values underpins youth work in Finland, such as voluntarism, active participation of youth, and building relationships based on trust between young people and the youth worker, the exact relationship of so-called "basic youth work" mostly done with groups and targeted youth work done with individuals is far from settled in Finland, both from the perspectives of practice and theory (Nieminen 2014).

Reconceptualising saying and doing: shaping youth work in Finland

The strengths of Finnish youth work – its ability to adapt to different situations, to work in different settings and to invent new ways of engaging with the young – also present challenges. Recently, there have been discussions about the vague and even "amoeba-shaped nature" of youth work (Kivijärvi and Heino 2013). There have been efforts to react to this character of youth work. One solution is to set up quality assurance and auditing mechanisms. No national quality assurance methods for youth work currently exist and even the development of indicators has been slow. There are, however, bottom-up methods of demonstrating the value of youth work, such as the self-assessment and evaluation model developed by the Network of Urban Youth Work (Kanuuna), which aims to meet the challenge of evidence-based policy and proving the outcomes and quality of youth work (Nöjd and Siurala 2015). Some efforts in the Finnish context aim to use different theoretical approaches in analysing and describing youth work. For the purposes of this chapter, two approaches will be presented as illustrative examples.

The capital city of Helsinki has in its municipal youth work utilised the capability approach, a theoretical perspective commonly associated with Martha Nussbaum and Amartya Sen. According to this approach, the focus should be on "what people are actually able to do and to be" and "what opportunities people have for functioning" (Nussbaum 2003: 39). This means paying attention to the role of the individual in a certain setting and ensuring that s/he is able to live a good life and is able to participate. According to Nussbaum, there are 10 central human capabilities: life; bodily health; bodily integrity; senses, imagination and thought; emotions; practical reason; affiliation; other species; play; control over one's environment (Nussbaum 2003: 41-2). This broad perspective on human welfare has been taken as a framework

for reorganising youth work in Helsinki. This enables youth work to expand its horizons and reflect on its role in multi-professional settings, and it also provides an argument for positive discrimination in youth work. According to the manager of youth work in the city, youth work needs to focus on its ultimate goals instead of just listing the methods used (Laitio 2014). Using a philosophical theory as a framework of youth work enables practitioners to ask broader questions and link methods to a shared professional framework.

The city of Kokkola has created a curriculum for youth work. Instead of using available theories, the description of youth work is based on long-term, practice-based research examining the ethos and practices of youth work (see Kiilakoski, Kinnunen and Djupsund 2015). According to the results, youth work is an educational process that produces learning on an individual and social level. Youth work is interpreted as a relational pedagogy: it helps youth improve relations with their peers, adults, other youth-related services, the region, society, and the environment and the world at large. Using these ideas, youth work is analysed as a process that produces emergent outcomes, which can be evaluated using broad youth-policy oriented approaches.

Both of the projects above have a similar basis. The aim is to respond to the vagueness of youth work by using broad theoretical and philosophical theories to explicate the ethos and impact of youth work. This can be seen as an example of the strong professional approaches in Nordic welfare states, in that methods for evaluation are developed by the professions themselves.

Conclusion: combining the elements of youth work in Finland

The practice architecture of youth work in Finland consists of socio-political conditions that legitimise youth work as a universal service provided by the public sector and supported by professional training at secondary and tertiary levels. In addition to this, there is a tradition of doing youth work, which is recognised as having a professional working culture. As has been stated, there is no uniformly accepted definition of youth work in Finland. Despite different views about the nature of youth work, some conceptions are shared.

Firstly, youth work is an age-specific activity – the way youth work relates to the target group is influenced by an understanding of what it means to be a young person in society. The significance of adolescence as a distinctive period in human development is recognised and the requirements of this phase in life are met by providing opportunities to engage in a peer group, have fun and be active and mature as a person and as a citizen. More recently, an awareness has developed that the traditional age group of young people from 13 to 20 should be expanded to include young adults having difficulties in making the transition to higher education and the labour market, and also younger children who could benefit from the activities of youth work.

Secondly, youth work is about creating activities for youth who engage in the process of youth work on a voluntary basis. Its voluntary nature is often thought to be an important feature of youth work: it helps to create a certain contact with young people that is not based on disciplinary power but on co-operation.

This element of youth work is one of the constitutive features of the ethos of Finnish youth work, which is also manifested for example in the ethical code of youth work. Voluntarism influences both thinking and doing youth work.

Thirdly, youth work creates spaces where young people can co-operate and have fun with their peer group. Youth work is about facilitating group activities of the young. As has been described above, the sense of peer dynamics is at the heart of the professional know-how of youth work. This is based on a belief that the group activities of the young will most likely produce effective results, although one does not know the exact outcomes. However, work with vulnerable youth using individual methodologies will likely increase in the future.

Fourthly, the conception of youth work as education has been important in the history of Finnish youth policy. Recent theoretical and practical studies also emphasise this perspective; the discourse about youth work is thus influenced as well. This has also justified arguing for the autonomy of youth work in Finland, as an agent different from formal education or youth care.

Fifthly, youth work aims at promoting youth participation both within youth work and in society as a whole. This involves empowering youth and creating social structures that help them express themselves. According to Williamson (2014), Finland is among the few countries in Europe that actually systematically bases youth work on seeing young people as a resource rather than a problem.

The mutually dependent saying, doing and relating of youth work as identified by Kemmis (2009) frame youth work practice in the Finnish context, used here to emphasise its voluntary nature, educational discourse and group work approach, which is less concerned about an individual young person at presumed risk. These five features of Finnish youth work provide relevant justifications for not becoming individual-centred or problem-oriented, even in the neo-liberal era.

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Chapter 5
Youth work in France

Laurent Besse, Jérôme Camus and Marc Carletti

The expression "*travail de jeunesse*" is a recent French coinage taken directly from the English phrase "youth work". It reflects the Europeanisation of public policy, but is not used outside a small circle of researchers familiar with what is happening in Europe and educationalists involved in European youth programmes. Front-line players would, moreover, be surprised to learn that they are called *travailleurs de jeunesse* (youth workers), yet there are types of social work that fall under the category of *travail de jeunesse* in France, chief among them *animation socioculturelle* (socio-cultural activities) (Loncle 2009). However, they are subject to a kind of paradoxical institutionalisation, which means that they exist without being named as such. If the concept of *animation* is somewhat hazy, the concepts of *animation jeunesse* (youth activities) or *travail de jeunesse* are even more so. Where they have become established, these expressions have gained currency solely among professionals in the field of *animation* and community education (e.g. Institut national de la jeunesse et de l'éducation populaire – INJEP, youth and community education federations, government agencies). This is another reason to put *animation* or youth work back into the category in which it belongs: that of all forms of social assistance for young people, of which it is merely one kind.

Animation: a French version of youth work?

Youth has long been an uncertain and even somewhat suspect category for public policy. This is partly demonstrated by three things. The first of these was a dictatorship, the Vichy Government (1940-44), which implemented the first public youth policy aimed at young people outside the school environment. So the legacy was not an easy one to deal with. In addition, from the 19th century onwards, when France was structured around the conflict between the Catholic Church and the secular Republic, it was almost exclusively Catholic youth movements that were successful: the Catholic Scout movement and Catholic Action movements. But this audience must itself be put into perspective, because it has always been much smaller than that of youth movements in neighbouring countries. This brings us to a third point: it is as if the assertion of youth identity, which was expressed through the supervised autonomy of youth movements from the 1930s to the 1950s and through the emergence of a specific youth culture during the 1960s, was less acceptable to French society

than it was to other societies. This resulted in the notable concept of *animation* that developed during the 1960s: although primarily geared towards young people, it was never proclaimed to be action aimed solely at young people. The French equivalents of youth centres, or youth and culture centres, are called *maisons des jeunes et de la culture* (MJC), and "culture" is added to legitimise work whose youth audience alone was not sufficient to make it worthy of interest. It also seems that the way in which *animation* is institutionally linked to sport in the various ministries and government departments is equally characteristic of the situation in France. The organic link between "youth" and "sport", which is the legacy of a desire on the part of the government to create a population of young people who are fit and able to fight to defend the nation, is still explicit within the administrative organisation of the state. While several European countries such as the United Kingdom and Finland view youth work as being clearly the preserve of a ministry of education, youth issues in France cut across several ministries, with a more specific role being given to the Ministry of Youth and Sports for non-formal education for young people.

So we may observe that since it began in the 1960s, *animation socioculturelle* has assumed an overtly cultural mantle while retaining a sometimes problematic link of dependency with the Ministry of Sports. It therefore focused on sporting and cultural leisure activities while tending to devalue youth sociability. It developed its activities to complement, or even to compete against, schools. By working outside schools for the youngest and outside working hours for those who were older, it formed part of the legacy of community education that sought to democratise culture by targeting as many people as possible. The distinction between youth work and community work is therefore weaker in France than it is in other European countries, and this remains the case today.

A social revolution for essentially interstitial youth work

The strong cultural dimension of *animation* and its connection with the Ministry of Sports made it more difficult to achieve continuity with the new forms of youth work that emerged at the beginning of the 1980s, and the variety of these new professional practices only highlighted the low degree of visibility in general. As the "youth" age group expanded, with unemployment becoming widespread and the duration of school education lengthening, new professions emerged. As local social and occupational integration centres (*missions locales*) came to be introduced from 1982 onwards, integration advisors (*conseillers en insertion*) were responsible for helping those aged 16 to 25 to find training, housing or employment. Shortly afterwards, urban policy professionals, some of whom were social liaison workers (*médiateurs sociaux*), acted as youth workers. This social revolution in activities aimed at young people was accompanied by a gradual reduction in the number of people whom it targeted. While the *animation* of the 1960s was aimed at an entire genera-tion, the work done in the 2010s has been confined in particular to "young people in difficulty", namely young people in lower-income classes, especially those in the run-down suburban neighbourhoods known as *banlieues*. Although it had existed since the time of the first youth movements, the social and health-related dimension of *travail de jeunesse* was clearly taking shape, as was demonstrated between 2000 and 2010 by the linkage between the relevant authority, the Ministry of Youth and

Sports, and the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs. Its offices in the *départements* (administrative divisions below the regions) were absorbed in 2010 into the social cohesion departmental services of this last ministry.

This social revolution is not reflected in the full integration of training, qualifications and professions for *animation* in the social work field. The links with the culture, sport and education sectors and the "generalist" aim of *animation* that is aimed at everyone still exist today. Although the boundaries of *travail de jeunesse* remain blurred and it is not well recognised, support for young people outside school in France is still closely connected with professions in the field of *animation*, be it social, socio-educational or socio-cultural. As in other European countries, and to quote the analyses of British youth work carried out by Bernard Davies and Tom Bradford, *animation* is, therefore, essentially "interstitial" (Besse and Carletti 2016). As such, the basis of its existence and practice and the more theoretical orientations that underpin it dovetail with those of the connected fields of education, culture, social work and, to a lesser extent, sport and leisure.

An underexplored field of study and research

Neither *travail de jeunesse* nor animation has become an academic discipline despite the ambitions of some stakeholders in this perspective. The fact that a significant proportion of the training courses for *animation* professions has been entrusted to youth and community education federations in tandem with the state agencies that certify them has certainly limited the development of academic research on *animation*. Universities have offered the *diplôme universitaire de technologie* (DUT)[28] since the end of the 1960s as well as some vocational degrees and Master's courses, but research output is insignificant in comparison with countries where youth work is recognised as an academic field in its own right. Finally, the weakness of the identity and status of *animateurs* has made it difficult to tie these professions in with a clearly defined field (education, social work or culture), and this has doubtless contributed to the lack of unity and visibility of scholarly or expert output. The long history and dynamism of voluntary sector and institutional stakeholders in the field of *animation* and community education and the persistence of a form of recognition by the state have given rise to the publication of a considerable volume of studies and analyses concerning the practice, professions, values and role of youth work. But the variety and number of the models presented and analysed by Trudi Cooper with regard to British youth work (2012) are unmatched in France.

Voluntary *animation*

Animation has long been the preserve of the voluntary sector, that is the private sector in the legal sense of the term. Its most standard form is local not-for-profit associations, established under the 1901 Law relating to contract of association, which are members of national federations. The professionalisation that occurred from the 1960s onwards, which was the most visible feature of this institutionalisation, was accompanied by the financing of associations by the public authorities.

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28. DUT: Technical degree (ISCED 5b).

In the 1960s, there was said to be co-management among the state, town councils and the associations. The creation of youth and community education co-operation funds (Fonds de coopération de la jeunesse et de l'éducation populaire – FONJEP), which were intended to finance *animateur* jobs through cross-contributions from different stakeholders, was the most visible form of this. Since the 1970s, the proportion of state financing has fallen and this has been compensated by funds from the family allowance funds (*caisses d'allocations familiales*) and municipal councils.

The growing contribution from municipal councils is worth noting, especially with the creation in 1996 of an *animation* branch in the public sector at local and regional level. Municipalities are now not only financing not-for-profit associations but also employing *animateurs* directly, a practice that was rare until the 1980s. Despite everything, within both municipal councils and the voluntary sector, the voluntary dimension of *animation* is constantly being strengthened. It has been accompanied by an increased focus on youth participation, even where this takes forms that are less ambitious and less restrictive in terms of duration than in previous decades. From the Juniors Associations[29] to civic service via the reintroduction of youth committee meetings (*conseils de maison*) at youth centres, the question of engagement is being addressed in multiple ways.

Yet the institutionalisation of *animation* has not led to its real legal and social recognition. It is not defined by any official instruments. Furthermore, by contrast with other European countries (e.g. Finland, the United Kingdom), there is no obligation for a local authority to provide a youth service. There are *animation* qualifications in place: most are devised by youth and community education federations in association with the state's certifying bodies, such as the professional degrees *Brevet professionnel de la jeunesse, de l'éducation populaire et des sports* (BPJEPS) (ISCED 3) and the *Diplôme d'Etat de la jeunesse, de l'éducation populaire et des sports* (DEJEPS) (ISCED 5a). Universities also offer some *diplômes universitaires de technologie* (DUT) (ISCED 5b) in social work careers and vocational degrees in *animation*. But no qualification is actually necessary to work in *animation*. This point clearly distinguishes *animateurs* from other social workers, including those who work with young people. Conversely, the term animateur encompasses jobs that are in fact very varied, at levels of responsibility that are also varied. It can refer to professionals as well as voluntary workers (Lebon 2008).

Travail de jeunesse is, therefore, a weak institution that is overshadowed by sectors that are more clearly identified and structured, such as social work and, in particular, schools (in the broadest sense of the word). In fact, one of the major issues for *travail de jeunesse* in France at the moment is probably the question of its relationship with school activities. *Animation* was created in opposition to school activities because it was intended to mark a break with the work that had been done up to that point, which was fairly heavily based on extracurricular or after-school activity, in which primary school teachers played an essential role from the 19th century onwards. The break was therefore a very marked one, with *animation* often taking on anti-school undertones, while increasingly in parallel, animateurs appeared to act as a foil for teachers whose identity had become weaker. Ultimately, co-education is

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29. An arrangement enabling minors to run an organisation.

a matter of priority in a society in which the great majority of young people are now in education beyond the age of 20 – a far cry from the 10% of each generation who were *baccalauréat*-holders in France in 1960, when *animation*, the historically most visible form of youth work *à la française*, came into being.

Youth work in its context: support for young people

In this context of mass school enrolment and increasingly difficult access to employment, *animation* appears to be a provider of jobs that are held to an overwhelming degree by young people.

"Non-professional" *animation*, carried out on a temporary basis, often within socio-cultural institutions that assist children alongside schools and families, is now fully considered a "casual job". These *animateurs* access jobs through the *brevet d'aptitude aux fonctions d'animateur* (BAFA),[30] and the vast majority are aged between 18 and 21 and are going through a period of transition between the end of their *lycée* studies and the beginning of higher education. Three quarters are women, and many are members of the middle and upper classes. This type of *animation*, which caters to over two million children every year, is therefore overwhelmingly provided by young people and suffers from a lack of both legal and symbolic recognition. It does not fall under employment law but cannot be regarded as a form of voluntary work (since *animateurs* receive an allowance), and is frequently associated with forms of babysitting or purely recreational roles, with the educational aspects struggling to gain full recognition. It stems directly from the summer camp movement and, although it is now aimed primarily at children, it is still a possible form of "youth work" (Camus and Lebon 2015).

Animation also has another face that is more professionalised and diversified, but this too is characterised by the young age of workers. While these jobs are the primary jobs of those individuals who hold them, and therefore determine their status (they are not upper secondary school or university students), the vast majority are aged between 20 and 30, and numbers plummet above the age of 35. These *animateurs* are frequently *baccalauréat*-holders, and most are, once again, women (75%), but in this case they have a tendency to come from working-class or middle-class backgrounds. The jobs are characterised by a high level of insecurity (which has affected more than 50% of jobs since 1985). The profession of *animateur* therefore appears to be a typical gateway to employment that, while differing from temporary *animation*, is nonetheless insecure; those involved wish to leave by taking up co-ordination roles (Lebon 2008).

The young age of those who hold *animateur* jobs brings us, on a broader level, to the issue of youth unemployment and underemployment. The harsh conditions in the job market and the growing numbers in higher education have created a grey area made up of insecure and often poorly paid jobs held by young people enrolled in largely linear academic trajectories.[31] "Young people's jobs" and "casual jobs",

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30. Skills certificate for volunteers in the field of youth work.
31. It is now believed that the proportion of students who also have a job is approximately 40%, and this proportion tends to increase as students progress in their studies.

which are a renewal of the old forms of mentorship (in its broadest sense) that were the main route of entry into work in the past, are now among a range of jobs that are held temporarily (including by non-students). However, as Vanessa Pinto shows, these jobs range from "provisional" employment, which is common in temporary *animation* and characterised by a marked disconnect between paid employment and education (which may be observed more among students from higher classes), to "perpetuation" (especially for students from lower-income backgrounds) among those who are frustrated in their studies, for whom the "casual job" can become a primary vocation. In between we have a form of "preparation" in which there is considerable adjustment between study and work, especially where university education is extended (for students from the middle and upper classes).

Animation, an activity pursued overwhelmingly by young people, is one of the forms of employment that sits at the halfway point between work and engagement. It offers young people considerable guidance/support and also has the advantage of contributing to efforts to deal with youth unemployment. Here we are thinking of the various forms of "voluntary work", and more specifically the European Voluntary Service (EVS) and civic service. These systems all promote a depoliticised vision of participation, as well as a discourse that seeks to mobilise as many people as possible by appealing to individual interests: this is how these "forms of engagement" must be subsequently "exploitable" through the experience and skills that they can generate in "pathways" of access to employment. As a flagship scheme within this grey area between work with young people and *travail de jeunesse*, the civic service (Service Civique), which was created in 2010 to encourage "voluntary engagement in the general interest" (Cours des comptes 2014),[32] also enables – perhaps in particular – young people from middle-class or higher-class backgrounds to gain experience of employment that they can put to good use, while maintaining a kind of moral focus through the somewhat vague "spiritual boost" associated with the system.[33] The European mechanisms (of the EVS type) work along the same lines. And at the same time, the increase in civic service since 2014 is a means of dealing with the problem of youth unemployment.

Two kinds of youth, two kinds of youth work

However, these systems are just one aspect of youth work *à la française*. To understand it, we must briefly return to the processes that led to a two-track mechanism for working with young people in France.

In France, the existence of work with young people is indissolubly linked with the treatment of this stage in life as a social issue. Without going into the history of this political construct, we may recall, at the very least, that young people are primarily the responsibility of schools: the development of socio-cultural *animation* in the 1960s was strictly contemporaneous with the considerable expansion of secondary education, while the democratisation of higher education in the 1990s was the

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32. See the Service Civique website, available at www.service-civique.gouv.fr, accessed 7 March 2017. www.service-civique.gouv.fr/page/qu-est-ce-que-le-service-civique.

33. Fewer than 25% of people who are performing civic service have a qualification that is below *baccalauréat* level.

backdrop against which different forms of social support for young people were developed. The rise in the number of students led to a broadening of the student youth model, which gradually became the norm. The operation of this model, which places individuals between childhood and adulthood in a relatively uncertain situation during a "moratorium" period (Mauger 1995: 19-36), is characteristic of France (Van de Velde 2008) and, at the same time, discredits other ways of spending one's youth. This is true of a second view, which describes young people as dangerous, threatening and delinquent. In particular, they are portrayed as male, idle and incapable of "integrating", namely finding work. The situations between these two opposite perspectives have become almost invisible. They include, for instance, individuals who attend vocational education courses and gradually find employment in ways that are close to *compagnonnage* at an age when other people are only just beginning their post-*baccalauréat* education. There are also the young women who try to make at least as much use of their level of qualification as their "female qualities" in the labour market, often with the result that they end up in highly insecure jobs, so much so that a not insignificant proportion of them give up and devote themselves entirely to the domestic sphere. Finally, there are those young men and women from lower-income backgrounds who go into higher education but do not adopt the student lifestyle (Truong 2015). These various groups of young people, who are under-identified or even ignored, are overlooked by government youth policies.

As for young people who are students and those from the *banlieues*, they are targeted by special state-supported efforts. These efforts, which are underpinned by a social basis, are helping to connect a hierarchy of moral judgments with these two perspectives and make a distinction, through political discourse and their institutional implementation, between "good" and "bad" young people. As far as the former is concerned, work with "good" young people tends to cultivate their desire to get involved, their creativity and personal relationship qualities (dedication), and their skills within mechanisms that aim to promote "engagement" and "citizenship" – in short, contributions to the common good. The research report produced by Erasmus+: Youth in Action national agency highlights the fact that the typical European volunteer is a young woman (70%) who holds a higher education qualification (often in the social sciences), and also notes that measures intended to incentivise disadvantaged young people, that is young people from lower-income backgrounds, are having a limited impact (Bouchaud 2012).

This issue is addressed in a very different way for young people from lower-income backgrounds. While in theory they are also targeted by all measures aimed at young people, in practice they are supported particularly by those who deal with employment and public safety issues. Without going into detail about the individualistic, rationalising and empowering focus of youth policies aimed at the most disadvantaged, whose "vulnerability" is now the dominant criterion by which they are identified (Thomas 2010), it may be noted that the aspects that relate to the "integration" of young people lie within the wider context of employment policies that, since the 1980s, have led to an increase in insecure contracts of employment. Furthermore, it should be noted that young people living in governmental housing have become a feature of the media and political debate about lower-income neighbourhoods and now suggests the idea of marginalisation that is more voluntary than imposed.

For these young people, *travail social* and *animation* efforts in "neighbourhoods" have become interwoven with a wider context, that of social measures that are more personalised and focused on training (or rather "employability"), employment and the preservation of social peace.

"Youth work", as work with young people and guidance for young people, is therefore characterised by the targeting of sub-populations within the age group and differential treatment of them on a social basis, while neglecting – within the same movement – a considerable proportion of young people who are not targeted either by programmes that encourage their engagement or by social and security assistance for young people from lower-income backgrounds.

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Chapter 6

Youth work and youth social work in Germany

Andreas Thimmel

I n Germany, the Child and Youth Welfare Act (Social Welfare Act SGB VIII) has provided a legal framework for youth work and youth social work since 1991. At European level, these two areas of social work are subsumed under the generic term "youth work". Since the 1960s, their existence and basic conceptual structure have been underpinned by the country's commitment to a differentiated social policy. They form part of child and youth welfare and are therefore a sub-category of the social sector and social work, with some overlap with the education sector. The municipal level has primary administrative responsibility for the organisation and funding of youth work. Alongside the municipal level, the *Länder* (federal states) and the federal government also fund activities in the area of youth work and youth social work. In particular, this takes place through *Land* youth development plans and the federal child and youth development plan. Public and voluntary bodies work together as partners in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity. On this basis, while the public sector has overall responsibility for infrastructure and service provision, the activities are mainly carried out by voluntary bodies. For several decades, there has been intensive academic-conceptual discussion of youth work and youth social work, which has been accompanied for some years now by corresponding quantitative and qualitative research.

Youth work consists of a range of educational services and socio-educational facilities, based on voluntary participation and a strict focus on young people's interests and needs. The target group is all children, teenagers and young adults living permanently in a municipality, a *Land* or the Federal Republic of Germany. Access is dependent on permanent residence, not German nationality. In practice and in youth work research, a distinction is made between open youth work (Deinet and Sturzenhecker 2013), for example in Open Youth Centres or youth recreation centres, youth association work and youth education (Hafeneger 2011). There are many different activities and structures, which involve both fixed and open groups: recreational activities, participatory projects and civic education, and cultural and

media projects. Voluntary commitment and youth policy lobbying and networking of professional and voluntary youth workers at *Land* and national level are established topics and practices. The aims of youth work are personality development, along with social, political and democratic learning. The educational goals are both the personal development of the young people participating and also the further development of society with regard to solidarity and democracy. Youth work must be distinguished from educational work with and in families, formal school education, further education, training and skills acquisition in the transitional phase between school and employment. Alongside their peers, the mass media and social media play a key part as agents of socialisation and as the backdrop to interaction and communication among young people. It is often through the media that young people develop or create their views of the world from local and global perspectives and communicate with one another.

In contrast, youth social work has a target group approach and supports young people with fewer opportunities. A distinction has to be made between assistance with the transition from school to vocational training or employment, activities forming part of social work in schools and, for instance, assisted accommodation. Young people with more limited initial opportunities, with difficulties in entering the labour market, disadvantaged young people and underprivileged young people with a low level of familial support are further target groups of youth social work. The voluntary bodies operating in the youth social work sector belong to the category of social welfare associations. These are not the same as the above-mentioned youth associations. Participation in youth social work activities is usually not voluntary; rather, failure on the part of a young person selected for the measure often results in the termination of financial assistance paid beforehand or the withdrawal of financial resources. Although the boundaries between youth work and youth social work tend to be blurred in practice and in terms of methods, the distinction is important for understanding the overall youth work situation in Germany. There is an overlap between youth work and youth social work in many cases, especially in the areas of mobile youth work, youth work with young people in disadvantaged urban areas and social work in schools.

Both sub-categories are described below, with the emphasis on youth work.

Youth work

Key aspects and age groups

The key aspects of child and youth work are their voluntary nature, participation, integration, focus on personal environments, group learning, affiliation with particular groups, biography, life skills, time and daily life management, promotion of self-esteem, regionalisation and decentralisation (Thole 2000: 260 ff.). The key forms of social interaction that are provided or experienced in practical youth work are group work, open work, seminars, recreational activities and project work. Youth work is therefore a separate part of the socialisation and educational provision for children, teenagers and young adults. The target groups are young children aged from 6 to 10 years, children aged 10 to 14 years, teenagers aged 14 to 18 years and

young adults aged 18 to 26 years, as well as older individuals involved in voluntary work. The age groups and classification contrast with the European discourse in connection with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, under which young people up to the age of 18 are described as children. Non-conformity and ideological criticism of other educational sectors are emphasised in an approach of this kind. Youth work is thus always aimed at all young people and can also provide positive support for disadvantaged groups through work geared towards specific target groups.

Funding provision and regional features

The relevant institutional and financial support is based on the youth work tradition of the former West Germany and a broad political consensus about the public responsibility to help children and young people grow up. In West Germany in the 1970s and 1980s, youth work was developed and expanded at practical level in the municipalities and also in the *Länder* and through the federal government's child and youth development plan, while a connection in terms of a discourse emerged between youth work research and youth work theory at the same time (Müller et al. 1967).

There is uncertainty of varying degrees at regional level about the current and future funding of youth work. The relevant legislation does not specify what percentage of public expenditure on child and youth welfare should go to youth work. Although municipalities are required to fund appropriate high-quality youth work, there is no political agreement about the minimum quality standards in infrastructural terms.

The municipalities have a statutory duty to develop and implement corresponding youth work infrastructure. Under the system of municipal self-government that applies in Germany, municipalities are autonomous in this respect. In some *Länder*, the funding and structural arrangements for youth work are laid down in municipal youth development plans, while in others the arrangements for youth work are less clear and comprehensive and are only set out in the relevant individual municipal budgets.

Funding at the municipal level is supplemented with funding from the other tiers of government (*Länder*, federal government and the EU). At this level, key financial and structural principles for thematic focuses are set out in *Land* youth plans, the federal child and youth development plan and the EU programme, Erasmus+: Youth in Action. Over the last two decades, the public sector has withdrawn from infrastructure support for youth work facilities and promoted project funding instead. The various initiative groups and youth associations were more or less obliged to seek fresh funding from foundations or develop projects on the basis of sponsorship. This trend has been criticised by experts.

Responsibility for implementing the development tasks of child and youth work players, whose activities are aimed at all children and young people in a community, usually lies with voluntary bodies, in particular youth associations, youth groups and initiatives. While this is based on the principle of subsidiarity and the special position of youth associations in the youth work sector, various public municipal

bodies also operate open youth work facilities such as recreation centres, youth centres and youth clubs.

Bodies responsible for youth work

Heterogeneity, pluralism and subsidiarity are essential features of the various bodies responsible for child and youth work. This is laid down by law and is also supported by the stakeholders. The structural arrangements for youth work vary across the individual *Länder*, making it difficult to provide a national overview. There are also drawbacks with any attempts to distinguish the different groups of bodies, as many combinations exist in practice and the relationships among the bodies themselves and the type of services delivered is becoming less significant. In analytical terms, distinctions can be made among youth associations, public bodies, initiative groups, associations, youth groups and operators of youth education centres and youth education players (as providers of cultural education, civic education, outdoor education, etc.).

Youth associations

In youth associations and groups, youth work is organised by young people themselves, who design it together and share in the responsibility. The activities are geared to the long term and targeted partly at their own members, as well as other young people who are not members. A key aspect is the balance among voluntary members, voluntary management positions and professional education experts or managers. The members of the youth associations decide themselves which issues they wish to address. In co-operation with Germany's two main religious denominations (Protestant and Catholic), church youth work has developed at the same time, but rightly sees itself as part of general youth work.

In addition to youth association work in the conventional sense mentioned above, youth associations act as providers and operators of facilities such as youth centres, drop-in centres and youth cafes. They run their own projects, such as holiday camps and co-operation projects with schools, and provide civic or cultural education. The concerns and interests of children and young people are voiced and represented by youth associations and their federations. Youth association work can be divided into the following areas: self-management and youth association committee work, youth work-related educational and recreational provision, and youth policy lobbying.

At federal level, youth associations are organised in the German Federal Youth Council (Deutscher Bundesjugendring – DBJR);[34] regional youth councils operate at *Land* level; and municipal and district youth councils provide a reliable networking structure for youth work at local level. Youth councils are usually responsible for youth policy lobbying and co-ordination of youth associations at the respective political levels, while youth associations also provide a wide range of youth work services. Youth associations, youth councils and church youth work reach young people from all backgrounds, including disadvantaged young people. The great regional differences and the heterogeneity of youth association work mean that

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34. Available at www.dbjr.de, accessed 8 March 2017.

the middle-class focus often ascribed to youth association work should at least be seen in a more nuanced manner.

Public bodies

The social education workers or social workers responsible for youth welfare or youth development in municipalities or administrative districts co-ordinate municipal youth work activities through youth or child and youth welfare offices. Alongside their co-ordinating and planning role, municipal youth welfare departments also themselves run youth centres or clubs as open youth work facilities. Open youth work includes playgrounds with educational supervision, play buses, youth centres, youth clubs, street work and mobile youth work. The staff concerned work in various areas of open youth work and have skills relevant to relationship development, enabling educational processes and developing awareness for informal everyday learning processes, both for individuals and for groups. This often involves co-operation with youth associations, youth clubs, youth culture initiative groups and youth centres operated by voluntary bodies.

Initiative groups, associations, youth groups

Various initiative groups, voluntary associations, youth groups and occasionally limited companies or foundations also run open youth work facilities alongside youth associations and municipal authorities. The areas of open youth work listed on the home page of the ABA Federation for Open Work with Children and Young People (ABA Fachverband Offene Arbeit mit Kindern und Jugendlichen e.V. – Der Verband für handlungsorientierte Pädagogik) illustrate the breadth of the thematic focus of the providers and the services run by initiatives, associations and youth groups. They include adventure playgrounds, outdoor education facilities, children's farms and wildlife centres, children and youth centres, mobile child and youth work, play buses and animal-assisted education.[35]

The relevant initiative groups are legally independent and financially autonomous organisations. They are usually registered associations or non-profit limited companies. They operate with a strong focus on a specific community (for example, an urban neighbourhood, small town, rural area) and/or technical specialisation in particular topics or target groups. Although they originally were autonomous entities operating locally, the various initiative groups have come together in umbrella organisations for youth policy, technical and funding reasons. The youth organisation of the Paritätische welfare association or the latter's central association do political lobbying on behalf of many initiative groups in the youth work field. Particularly in neighbourhoods with high levels of social problems, the focus on communities means that initiative group activities are key factors for integration and reducing social discrimination.

In some regions, open youth work is also carried out by youth social work bodies or welfare associations. In that case, the fundamental principles of open youth work also apply to them. The boundaries with mobile youth work and street work are blurred here.

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35. Available at http://aba-fachverband.org, accessed 8 March 2017.

Bodies responsible for youth education centres and youth education

Youth education centres are education or meeting centres with their own educational programmes and thematic focuses. There is a wide range of responsible bodies here, too. They include religious and political organisations, welfare associations, youth associations, other civil society players and charitable associations. Professional staff or volunteers organise, initiate and design learning processes. The learning takes place in the youth education centres or their immediate surroundings. The attractiveness of the premises, accommodation and catering, the design of the learning environment, various recreational options and the systematic provision of places and opportunities for "casual conversations" all ensure that the activities complement learning processes in schools.

Youth education centres vary in terms of topics covered and focuses. Depending on their geographical location and their approach, they may play a part in shaping the local educational landscape. The educational provision is characterised by participation, learner focus and social learning, as well as the discussion of relevant topics, with support for the learners from instructors. The combination of everyday life, biography and religious topics, as well as the diversity of methods, activities and experience-based learning incorporating interaction among peers and with the youth workers are essential aspects. Self-learning processes are woven into the specific nature of the place of learning, the organisational and learning culture of the centre, the educational experience in the group and joint reflection. Project-based educational work makes it possible to reach disadvantaged young people. Educational work is also done by municipal educational bodies and specific out-of-school youth education organisations, for example in the areas of civic and cultural education (Hafeneger 2011).

Youth social work

Youth social work services specifically target young people who are individually disadvantaged or classified as disadvantaged or structurally disadvantaged. Within specific areas of action influenced by funding bodies, youth social work seeks to tackle deprivation and discrimination and foster individual development. Growing social inequality and the increasing demands of the education and labour system are creating major challenges for youth social work. Various youth social work bodies have grouped together in the Youth Social Work Co-operation Network.[36] They form part of the welfare system and are classified as welfare associations. The network includes the workers' welfare association (Arbeiterwohlfahrt – AWO), the federal association of Protestant youth social work bodies (Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Evangelische Jugend-sozialarbeit – BAG EJSA), the federal association of Catholic youth social work bodies (Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft Katholische Jugendsozialarbeit – BAG KJS), the federal association of local-regional youth social work bodies (Bundesarbeitsgemeinschaft örtlich regionaler Träger der Jugendsozialarbeit – BAG ÖRT), the Paritätische welfare

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36. Available at www.jugendsozialarbeit.de, accessed 8 March 2017.

association (Der Paritätische), the German Red Cross (Deutsches Rotes Kreuz – DRK) and the Internationaler Bund for social work and youth social work (IB).

At municipal level, youth social work is managed, co-ordinated and partly municipally funded through the youth welfare planning system. Much additional funding is provided through programmes at *Länder* level and at federal level and through the EU, for example under Youth in Action or the European Social Fund.

Conceptual and funding modalities lead to clear differences in fields of action. Partially curricular formats and long-term approaches, for example in youth career guidance and support, are one set of activities. On the other hand, target group-specific and mobile youth social work approaches include open types of support, which means that the distinctions in relation to open youth work are blurred in this area. Youth social work has also been the subject of much theoretical discourse since the 1970s (Lempert and Franzke 1976; Fülbier and Münchmeier 2001). The various categories here are employment-related youth social work/youth career support, school social work, youth residences, migration-related youth social work and target group-specific and mobile approaches.

In the case of employment-related youth social work/youth career support, young people experiencing difficulties entering employment receive social work counselling and support. The activities here include counselling, education and support in terms of career guidance, preparation for and coping with training courses and, in some cases, specific educational, training and employment opportunities for young people in particular need of support, for instance, in the form of youth workshops and "production-based schools".

School social work addresses deprivation and discrimination in the general and vocational education system. Here, activities concern the transition to employment, training or further education. Career guidance and skill assessment tools are often employed in school social work. With the current expansionary phase in staffing and conceptual terms as part of the roll out of all-day schooling, school social work is expanding into "social work in schools". This includes many different activities conducted by social education workers/social workers in the school system, which are aimed at all pupils and now take place in all types of schools.

Youth residences are a specific type of assisted housing for young people who find themselves alone in new surroundings for training or work reasons and who receive assistance for coping with daily life from professional social workers. Migration-related youth social work, meanwhile, targets young people from migrant backgrounds. The youth migration services (Jugendmigrationsdienste – JMD) are a long-term programme funded by the federal government, with some 450 local agencies throughout the country run by voluntary bodies. Social workers support young people from migrant backgrounds, for example with individual integration plans for integrating them into education, employment and the country's diverse society. Under the differentiated youth welfare structure in Germany, young asylum seekers, children and young people granted exceptional leave of stay, children with experience of displacement or flight, young people fleeing persecution and children and young people with irregular status are not usually supported by the youth social work system or the above-mentioned youth migration services. Although refugees,

who have fewer rights than young German people or youth with secure residence status, do receive support in the form of advice from organisations working with refugees (Refugee Council, Migration Council, etc.), they have very little access to youth social work group activities. The funding for the organisations in the migration and integration sector and their activities for refugees do not, however, come from child and youth welfare budgets but from funding sources in the migration and integration sector. In a few cases, however, activities are developed for and with refugees as part of open and voluntary association youth work, or joint projects are carried out with the young people.

Lastly, assistance is provided through target group-specific and mobile youth social work as a means of offsetting deprivation. Young people who are hard to reach and tend to be on the margins of society, for example because of drug abuse, a propensity to violence, learning disabilities or material hardship, also need to be helped and protected against further exclusion through education and advice services and individual forms of assistance and support. This often takes place in co-operation with youth centres and youth clubs and through approaches based on social environments. In the work with specific target groups, for example young people at risk or young people in marginalised neighbourhoods, there is also an overlap with open youth work. While terms such as mobile youth work, detached youth work and street work actually describe different approaches to youth work, they can be subsumed under a single heading in this regard.

Current issues

The employment of youth work for social policy purposes as part of a shift in tasks towards youth career assistance, youth social work, prevention, a sole focus on disadvantaged groups and legally codified assistance with education is threatening the separate youth educational and democratically necessary core task of youth work and youth education. Youth work can play a key part in the modernisation of the school system (e.g. through the development of all-day schooling). In this connection, however, the institutional and educational-conceptual independence of youth work must be recognised and presented proactively, and its basis must be further improved in infrastructural terms. Cuts in youth work staffing and material infrastructure cannot be offset with action programmes. An appropriate mix between voluntary staff and salaried staff is essential for youth work. Volunteers cannot replace salaried staff.

Youth work and youth social work demand a high degree of specialised knowledge and methodological, organisational and educational skills, which must be acquired through university studies and constantly updated through further training. Given the current refugee issues, the key challenge is further developing youth work for the migration society (Thimmel and Chehata 2015).

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Chapter 7

Thinking about youth work in Ireland

Maurice Devlin

Introduction

reland is one of the few countries in Europe in which a definition of youth work is explicitly set out in legislation. According to the Youth Work Act 2001 (Section 3), youth work is:

> a planned programme of education designed for the purpose of aiding and enhancing the personal and social development of young persons through their voluntary involvement, and which is –
>
> (a) complementary to their formal, academic and vocational education and training; and
>
> (b) provided primarily by voluntary youth work organisations.

This definition may be imperfect (Spence 2007), and it may have the rather technical or instrumental character that legal language typically does, but it nonetheless encapsulates a few key points or principles that would command widespread agreement among people involved in youth work in Ireland, and in other parts of Europe (European Commission 2014; Williamson 2015). The first is that youth work is above all else an educational endeavour and it should therefore complement other types of educational provision. The second is that young people participate in youth work voluntarily: they can take it or leave it, a situation that is markedly different from their relationship with the formal education system. This means they have a different type of relationship with adults, reflected in the words that are used to describe them: youth workers generally refer to the young people they work with as "participants" or "members", or just as "young people", rather than as "students" or "pupils" or "clients" (although for a discussion of the usefulness of the latter term in

a youth work context see Sercombe 2010). The third point is that youth work in Ireland is mostly carried out by organisations that are non-statutory or non-governmental as well as not-for-profit.

A further important feature of the Youth Work Act, very relevant to the conceptualisation of youth work in Ireland, is that it defines "young persons" as all persons under the age of 25. However, it also specifies that in providing and supporting youth work programmes and services, "particular regard" may be had to the needs of young people aged between 10 and 20 inclusive (which is in practice the age group that participates most in youth work in Ireland) and also to the needs of young persons "who are socially or economically disadvantaged". This makes it clear that youth work in Ireland is regarded as something that is universally beneficial but that may be especially valuable or even necessary for particular groups of young people. Again, this is not uncommon: the "universal/targeted" axis is one dimension of the typology of youth work set out in a recent study of youth work in the EU (European Commission 2014: 6).

The impact of history on conceptions of youth work

The key points highlighted above make it immediately clear that Irish youth work – despite some areas of overlap – is different in significant ways from other "social professions" (Banks 2004, 2012) such as social work and social care work with young people. These differences also apply in the UK (of which all of the island of Ireland was a part until 1922), but not in many other parts of Europe. In Ireland, social workers:

> work with individuals, families, groups and communities with the aim of providing support, information and counselling to improve the quality of people's lives. Usually, people need to see a social worker when they experience difficulties (Careers Ireland 2015).

Social care workers are by definition primarily concerned with the care of those they work with. They:

> plan and provide professional, individual or group care to clients with personal and social needs. Client groups are varied and include children and adolescents in residential care; young people in detention schools; people with intellectual or physical disabilities; people who are homeless; people with alcohol/drug dependency; families in the community; or older people (Social Care Ireland 2015).

There is of course a link between caring for people on the one hand and working to promote their education and development on the other (as youth work does), but they are nonetheless distinct priorities. Furthermore, while there are exceptions, children and young people do not as a rule volunteer to avail of the services of a social worker or to put themselves in care, whereas they do volunteer to participate in youth work programmes and services.

The histories of all the social professions in Ireland do however have significant points of overlap. Youth work, social work and social care work all emerged as part of the broad charitable and philanthropic movements of the 19th and early 20th centuries concerned with "rescuing" (or controlling) needy, destitute and troublesome children

and young people. Modern social work emerged from such charitable interventions as well as from pioneering initiatives of major corporations (including Guinness) that employed welfare officers in the early 20th century, and also from statutory developments in areas such as probation services and housing support. The particular direction that social care work took, and its emphasis on residential services, was shaped by its links with the industrial and reformatory school system and with provisions for young offenders (Lalor, de Róiste and Devlin 2007: 290). Youth work's emergence as a separate area of practice was due to the intertwining of a number of contrasting impulses. Philanthropic concern and reactionary "moral panic" about young people (Cohen 2002) gradually merged with various forms of activism and engagement that associated youth not just with urgent social problems but also with the promise of the future and with the potential to defend and promote certain political, cultural or religious values and beliefs.

In youth work, as in other areas of social policy (including formal education at primary and secondary levels and the Irish hospital system), the historical influence of the principle of subsidiarity has meant that the state's main role in the past has been to fund and support the non-governmental sector as the main direct provider of services (Devlin 2010). Thus, almost all the existing youth work services in Ireland are delivered by voluntary (or 'non-governmental') organisations (NGOs). For many years the state's supportive role was provided by the Department (Ministry) of Education, but in 2011 a Department of Children and Youth Affairs was established. As the name of the department indicates, there is now a much greater emphasis on ensuring the co-ordination of policy and services for children and for youth, and the state has generally become more proactive in guiding and assessing the youth work sector and in requiring it – like other areas of provision and practice – to demonstrate that it is achieving worthwhile outcomes for young people. When Ireland's first National Children's Strategy was introduced in 2000 it was concerned only with persons under 18 years of age (Department of Health and Children 2000). Its successor in 2014 was entitled Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: National Policy Framework for Children and Young People and extended to all persons under 25. According to the framework, all policies, services and practices designed with children and young people in mind should strive to meet five key outcomes. They should enable children and young people to:

- ▶ be active and healthy, and enjoy physical and mental well-being;
- ▶ achieve full potential in all areas of learning and development;
- ▶ be safe and protected from harm;
- ▶ experience economic security and opportunity;
- ▶ be connected and respected, and be contributing to their world.

    (Department of Children and Youth Affairs 2014)

This policy framework provided the basis for three further targeted strategies, including the National Youth Strategy 2015-2020 (Department of Children and Youth Affairs 2015), which will be referred to again below.

Principles and practice: what do youth workers do?

We have already seen that according to the vast majority of practitioners and policy makers in Ireland, youth work rests on a number of key principles:

▶ it is primarily concerned with the education and development, personal and social, of young people;

▶ it relies on the voluntary engagement of young people: they are not compelled to attend or to take part;

▶ as an important part of civil society or what is sometimes called "associative life" (through which citizens come together to work collaboratively to achieve shared objectives), the role in youth work of voluntary organisations, and individual volunteers, is vital.

We can add a number of other principles to these, reflecting recent and current policy, practice and research (e.g. Department of Education and Science 2003: 13-15; National Youth Council of Ireland 2006; Devlin and Gunning 2009; Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs 2010; Department of Children and Youth Affairs 2015):

▶ youth work is committed to ensuring and promoting the safety and well-being of young people;

▶ young people are full and active partners in youth work, participating meaningfully in making decisions and in programme planning and implementation;

▶ youth work should aim to empower young people and give them a voice, individually and collectively, and it should uphold and promote the rights of children and young people as citizens (such as those set out in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child);

▶ youth work should aim for openness and inclusiveness and for the active promotion of equality; no individual young person, and no group of young people, should feel excluded or diminished in a youth work context;

▶ youth work has a community dimension and a social purpose; it has benefits for adults as well as young people; it strengthens social solidarity and contributes to positive social change;

▶ youth work, like all good education, should be experienced as both challenging and enjoyable, fulfilling and fun, enriching and uplifting, for young people and for adults.

How do youth workers go about implementing these principles? What do they actually do? The main point to stress relates back to the first principle – that above all else, youth work is educational. As the National Youth Work Development Plan 2003-2007 (Department of Education and Science 2003: 13) put it, "education is by definition a planned, purposeful and conscious process (whereas 'learning' may or may not be planned and purposeful, and may or may not be conscious)". This means that the youth worker should approach any activity or programme, any situation or eventuality – however structured or unstructured and however expected or spontaneous – asking her/himself what opportunities it presents to further the education and development of young people, both individually and collectively.

This is why it makes sense to say that youth work can be educational in both "non-formal" and "informal" ways, as mentioned earlier. It is non-formal in that it does not (for the most part) take place in schools or follow a predetermined curriculum, and it is informal in that it rests crucially on a relationship between adults and young people that strives for optimum mutuality, cordiality and conviviality and makes the most of spontaneously arising "daily life activities" (Youth Service Liaison Forum 2005: 13), seeing these as central to its concerns rather than as distractions from some more "serious" purpose. In answer to the question "what do youth workers do?", therefore, an important part of the response is that how they do things is at least as important as the things that they do. This is often described in terms of "process" and "product" (or "process" and "task"). It is not helpful (despite what some earlier writing in youth work would seem to suggest) to see these in terms of a polarity, whereby an emphasis on one must inevitably be at the expense of the other. It is better to see them as different dimensions of the youth worker's role, one enriching the other (Devlin and Gunning 2009) and both part of a cycle that moves through stages of experience, reflection and conceptualisation and then onto further, enriched experience and experimentation, which begins the cycle again (see Kolb 1984; for a critique see Smith 2001).

As regards the activities and programmes to which youth workers bring the approach just sketched, the range is very wide. The following list gives just some of the major possibilities. It is important that the overall approach to the programme or activity and the principles informing the interaction with young people be consistent with those indicated above. This means that the approach to, for example, sports or arts in a youth work context is different from one where sports or arts are in themselves the primary concern (Devlin and Healy 2007).

Youth work activities and programmes

1. Recreational and sporting activities and indoor/outdoor pursuits, uniformed and non-uniformed.
2. Creative, artistic and cultural or language-based programmes and activities.
3. Spiritual development programmes and activities.
4. Programmes designed with specific groups of young people in mind, including young women or men, young people with disabilities, young travellers or young people in other ethnic groups, young asylum seekers, young LGBT people (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender).
5. Issue-based activities (e.g. justice and social awareness, the environment, development education).
6. Activities and programmes concerned with welfare and well-being (health promotion, relationships and sexuality, stress management).
7. Intercultural and international awareness activities and exchanges.
8. Programmes and activities focusing on new information and communication technologies (ICTs).
9. Informal learning through association, interaction and conversation with youth workers and other young people.

It is also important to note that, in keeping with the principles outlined above, youth work often focuses on particular groups of young people who share certain

identities, circumstances or needs, and in many cases who have collectively been the victims of social inequalities (based on such factors as gender, class, disability, race, ethnicity and sexuality). Such work clearly has an important role to play in addressing the developmental needs of individual young people who may be facing particular difficulties related to their material circumstances, a lack of equal opportunities for leisure and socialising, and prejudice and discrimination, along with the impact this can have on confidence and self-esteem, and so on. However, youth work also has the potential – even the responsibility – to raise awareness in society as a whole of the nature and impact of such inequalities and to involve young people themselves in working to challenge and change them, and not just the young people directly affected. This is not a novel insight. More than 30 years ago, the National Youth Policy Committee made the point forcefully:

> If youth work is to have any impact on the problems facing young people today then it must concern itself with social change. This implies that youth work must have a key role both in enabling young people to analyse society and in motivating and helping them to develop the skills and capacities to become involved in effecting change. (National Youth Policy Committee 1984: 116)

A more proactive state: thinking differently about youth work?

It was made clear earlier in this chapter that the history of youth work in Ireland has been dominated by the principles and practice of voluntarism, in the sense not just that young people have participated in youth work voluntarily (i.e. non-compulsorily), but that the provision of youth work services has been primarily seen as the responsibility of voluntary organisations (non-governmental) and of individual volunteers (non-paid). All of these features continue to apply. The voluntary participation of young people and the primacy of voluntary organisations in the provision of youth work are enshrined in the legislative definition, and the Youth Work Act 2001 also foresaw a greater role for volunteers than for paid staff in local consultative and decision-making structures for youth work. However, these structures have never been formally implemented and a number of developments in the meantime might be taken as evidence that the state's view of the voluntary principle(s) in Irish youth work has been (or is gradually being) tempered with a commitment to a range of other principles and policies.

The Department of Children and Youth Affairs was established in 2011, as stated earlier, and this means that responsibility for youth work now lies within a ministry that oversees a wide range of policies and services for children and young people, all of them expected to work towards the five common outcomes of the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People. Overall, it can be said that the approach of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs to youth work, as part of a broader policy for children and young people, "is now proactive rather than reactive as was the case in the past" (Murphy 2014: 10).

The National Policy Framework includes a commitment to the development of "quality standards and training for all professionals working directly with children and young people, ensuring a highly trained, supported and professionally aligned

workforce". In the case of youth work, the National Quality Standards Framework has been in place for several years, applying not just to youth services employing paid professional staff (Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs 2010) but – in a less onerous form – to volunteer-led clubs and groups as well (2013). The concern with child protection is a further common feature: Children First, the National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children (2011) have been placed on a formal statutory footing along with other provisions under the terms of the Children First Act 2015.

In some respects youth work's position as a distinctive form of practice with young people has been strengthened. Even though the Youth Work Act 2001 gave formal recognition and a legislative definition to youth work in Ireland, the structural features of the Act were not implemented. It was only in recent years that the state's responsibilities for youth work services were placed on a full statutory footing with the passing of the Education and Training Boards Act 2013, according to which the Education and Training Boards (ETBs) were given responsibility, among other things, to "support the provision, coordination, administration and assessment of youth work services". Importantly, in giving this responsibility to the ETBs the legislation explicitly confirmed the 2001 definition of youth work.

Nonetheless, youth work is increasingly influenced by national and local policies in a range of other areas – notably, for example, relating to youth employment and youth justice – and in ways that may have a long-term impact on both the conception and the practice of what it is that youth workers do. In the light of this, and of what has already been said in this chapter, should we think of youth work as a profession?

The answer is not as straightforward as it might seem. There has long been an academic debate about the definition of professions – which occupations fall under the category of "profession" and which do not, and on what basis one makes the distinction – but most research in this field now takes the view that a rigid definitional or categorical approach is of limited value and that it is more helpful to study the *processes* that occupations go through as they change over time. This involves making use of the concept of professionalisation.

Youth work has certainly changed enormously over time, and one of the key changes is that the people doing it are now much more likely than they were in the past to be doing it on a full-time paid basis and to have to give an account of themselves to line managers, boards of management and funders. This is itself suggestive of a process of professionalisation. Exact figures are hard to come by, but it has been estimated that there are approximately 1 400 full-time paid youth workers in Ireland (Indecon 2012: 45) and the real number could be substantially higher. It is also generally recognised that youth work has become an increasingly complex and challenging job and that to be able to do it properly, a substantial process of advanced training and education is necessary. That is why a number of third-level institutions in the Republic of Ireland currently offer professional programmes in this field, operating under an all-Ireland framework for the sectoral approval or endorsement of such programmes and a mutual recognition framework covering both Ireland and the UK (see Devlin 2012: 184-5).

Of course, it also remains the case that most of the people who do youth work are volunteers. There are perhaps as many as 40 000 volunteers in the youth work sector (Indecon 2012: 44) and they too carry significant responsibilities in their engagement and interaction with young people. Goodwill is not enough to make for successful youth work practice, whether by paid staff or volunteers. This is why youth organisations have provided volunteer training programmes for many years, and why the National Youth Work Advisory Committee and National Youth Council of Ireland developed a common national induction programme for volunteers (National Youth Council of Ireland 2010). The concept of professionalism, referring to high standards, responsibility and accountability, need not be limited to paid workers. This was the view expressed in the National Youth Work Development Plan:

> Youth work is not just a *vocation*, although almost inevitably the people who do it have a particularly strong sense of personal commitment to the work and to the well-being of young people. It is a *profession*, in the sense that all those who do it, both volunteer and paid, are required and obliged, in the interests of young people and of society as a whole, to carry out their work to the highest possible standards and to be accountable for their actions. (Department of Education and Science 2003: 14)

It is interesting however that Ireland's recently launched national youth strategy appears to associate professional status with those who are paid and qualified. One of its overarching principles is that "professionals and volunteers who work with young people are respected, valued and appropriately supported in their work", and it refers to actions that will "support workforce (professional and volunteer) expertise and skills".

It is certainly likely that the coming years will see some realignment and reconceptualisation in Ireland of the various forms of work with young people. This process, already underway, will be given further impetus if the goals of the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People are fulfilled. For example, under the goal of "cross-government and interagency collaboration and coordination", there is a commitment to "[s]upport the development of interdisciplinary and inter-professional training programmes which encourage leadership and collaboration for professionals working with children and young people across the range of service delivery."

Conclusion

Youth work in Ireland is at a decisive point in its development. For the first time in its history it has been placed on a statutory basis and it has an explicit definition in law; its contribution has been recognised as central to both the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People and the National Youth Strategy. However, the very fact that it has gained increased attention and support from the state means that it is increasingly expected to meet national policy priorities and achieve "outcomes" that may differ in significant ways from its traditional concerns, and it is increasingly subject to systems of monitoring, quality assurance and accountability similar to those in other areas of work with young people, including social work and teaching. These developments may lead people to think about it in different ways, and ultimately to practise it in different ways. One of the implications of this is that the

training of youth workers, while stressing the core theories, values and principles that have been central to its history and development, may also need to prepare the youth workers of the future for significant challenges and change, not just in the world around them but in the very nature of their own practice.

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Chapter 8

Youth work in Italy: between pluralism and fragmentation in a context of state non-interference

Daniele Morciano

Introduction

The history of youth work in Italy is mainly the history of association-based youth education outside the school. Following the Second World War, the state began to consider the third sector as the main provider of youth work. After the totalitarian, systematic state intervention of the fascist regime, the not-for-profit associations of political parties (mainly on the Left) as well as religious institutions (mostly Catholic) developed pluralistic youth work. This was achieved with the help of limited direct public interventions alongside increasing entrustment of public-funded youth centres to the third sector. This constituted a policy of non-interference in youth-led spaces together with a tendency to isolate them if they were considered to be excessively critical of the status quo.

While ideological pluralism became widely accepted from the 1980s on, the archi-pelago of youth work in Italy still struggles to build a common national framework of youth work principles, objectives, approaches and skills. The launch of a public youth policy during the 1980s can be viewed as an attempt to respond to such a deficiency. This new intervention of the state, however, was mainly situated within the social policies of local authorities, thus focusing on a reparative approach to health or social problems (i.e. delinquency, early school leaving, alcohol abuse, drug addiction, sexual education, pregnancy during adolescence, unemployment) until the beginning of the 21st century.

A phase of youth policy more oriented towards youth empowerment and emancipation objectives was launched in 2006, when the Ministry of Youth was set up (the first of its kind), along with a new national fund for youth policies. Affected by an endogenous process of reutilising public or private abandoned spaces, this new youth policy led to the financing of the development of new public youth spaces in co-operation with the third sector. This new wave of centre-based youth work would soon need to face drastic cuts to the public funding dedicated to youth policies. The abolition of the Ministry of Youth in 2011 is part of the current uncertainty surrounding youth policy in Italy. Within a general legislative vacuum in national youth policy, moreover, there is still no public regulation of a specific professional role for youth workers in Italy, while the different political or religious associations tend to train educators according to their respective ideologies.

The early 20th century

The perception of youth as dangerous became part of Italian public opinion between the end of the 1800s and the first two decades of the 1900s, as in other European states. With the loosening of family ties and the rules associated with this membership, society was confronted with a mass of unskilled and unemployed young people (Dogliani 2003).

While policies of repression and institutionalisation addressed this problem among the lower classes, the middle and upper classes began to direct their attention towards the education of the young through group activities beyond school (Fincardi and Papa 2007). Sports, games, excursions and other forms of leisure-time sociality began to be promoted among young males of the bourgeoisie in order to "temper the body and the individual" and thus mature values based on patriotism and national competitiveness.

The National Body of Youth Scouts (Corpo Nazionale dei Giovani Esploratori – CNGEI) became the leading secular Scout organisation supported by the state. It was founded in 1912 through the initiative of Carlo Colombo, a positivist physiologist and hygienist who reinterpreted the educational proposals of Baden-Powell in order to create a paramilitary youth organisation, aligned to the principles of the military before those of the school (Pisa 2000).

The early 20th century also witnessed the growth of secular pacifist Scouting, prior even to the CNGEI. Founded by Francis Vane in November 1910, however, the Italian Boy Scouts (Ragazzi Esploratori Italiani – REI) dissolved after a few years, dismembered into a Catholic wing (merged into a new Scout organisation) and another that would feed into the nationalistic orientation of the CNGEI Scouting movement.

Established in 1916, the Italian Catholic Scout Association (Associazione Scautistica Cattolica Italiana – ASCI) would take on the educational aims and methods of Baden-Powell (i.e. development of character, contact with nature, development of manual skills, taste for adventure, service to others) and place them within an explicitly Christian vision of life and society. Religious instruction (catechism) would therefore form the basis of the educational proposal of Catholic Scouting (Trova 1986).

Youth associations were also promoted by socialist and communist political movements to provide a new space for young people within the new mass parties. The Socialist Youth Federation (Federazione Giovanile Socialista – FGS), for example, was founded in 1907, adhering to the Socialist Youth International, sharing the objectives of pacifist education alongside those of union protection for a growing class of young workers. Furthermore, between the two World Wars, sporting associationism among young people in Italy would receive a boost from initiatives such as the International Union for Physical Education and Workers' Sport (UISES).

Youth associations among the working classes founded the "People's Houses" in the second half of the 1800s to integrate political education with leisure activities within the tradition of the mutual aid associations and worker co-operatives. Activities of artistic production and fulfilment (e.g. choirs and bands, social theatre, concert halls) were combined with self-education (e.g. libraries, reading rooms) as well as recreational spaces (e.g. cafes, restaurants, bars) (Orsi 2013).

The People's Houses provoked opposition from the Church and local parishes. However, the emerging social Catholicism movement also created White People's Houses, powered by the force of the Rerum Novarum issued in 1891, with which the Catholic Church, taking a position on social issues, founded the Christian social doctrine.

The fascist regime

The fascist movement placed youth at the heart of its political programme in order to exploit their vitality for an expansionist and militarist national strategy. To this end, it promoted mass youth education in leisure time, alongside a gradual suppression or marginalisation of the traditional youth associations and the exploitation of school as a means of ideological indoctrination.

In 1920, the Student Vanguard (Avanguardia studentesca) was formed, a combative student movement with fascist sympathies similar to the fascist University Groups (Gruppi Universitari Fascisti – GUF). Indeed, students represented the largest group among members of the early National Fascist Party (PNF) (Baris 2011).

In 1926, the National Balilla Action (Opera Nazionale Balilla – ONB) was founded. It was an autonomous body with the task of educating young people aged between 8 and 18. On the basis of the rules regulating Fascist Party discipline, the task of the ONB was to pursue a "total" training intervention that would provide "a) a sense of discipline and military education in the young; b) military education; c) gymnastic physical education; d) spiritual and cultural education; e) vocational and technical education" (Baris 2011: 196).

The aims of the military preparation as carried out by the ONB became explicit in 1934, with the introduction of compulsory military service for all young males aged 18 years and above. Moreover, from 1934 to 1935, compulsory military culture courses were introduced in schools, until the introduction of a "military afternoon" for all (the so-called fascist Saturday).

The phasing out of competing youth organisations represented a specific strategy that brought about an induction of young people into the rising fascist organisations. With the creation of Littorio's Italian Youth (Gioventù Italiana del Littorio – GIL) in 1937, direct control by the PNF of all youth organisations was perfected.

A further factor in the success of fascist mass youth education was the creation of a widespread network of local educational spaces. Despite their different forms (e.g. Case dei Balilla, Case del Gil, Case della Giovane Italia, Case del Fascio), these spaces followed a standard architectural pattern (e.g. gyms, showers, libraries, cinemas, sports facilities) with the ultimate intent of hosting activities of education, propaganda and political involvement carried forward by the fascist youth organisations.

Post-war reconstruction and the Cold War

The anti-fascist resistance and the post-war reconstruction can be considered as a period of intense youth participation in Italy, with a gradual emergence of young people as a "social subject". Considered a distinctly youthful choice (Dogliani 2003; Astolfi 2011), the resistance stands as a challenge to weak engagement in the public sphere of much of Italian society. As noted by Astolfi, the involvement of young people in the fight for liberation from Nazism/fascism represented a kind of "forced familiarisation with politics" (2011: 245).

Notable examples of co-operation between young people and adults in reconstruction include the Youth Brigades for the Reconstruction (Brigate Giovanili per la Ricostruzione) promoted by the Youth Front for National Independence (Fronte della Gioventù per l'Indipendenza Nazionale – FGD), an anti-fascist youth organisation born out of the resistance and open to both secular and Catholic associationism. Between 1945 and 1946 the Youth Brigades "were engaged in works of public utility and returning study and leisure spaces to their peers" (Dogliani 2003: 181), following the "Republics" model promoted by the Allies with communities self-managed by the young, designed to care for children orphaned by the war. The Allies simultaneously helped to lay the foundations for a process of de-fascistisation among youth, developing educational programmes based on the principles of personal initiative, accountability, respect and mutual aid, the practice of freedom and the ability to self-govern.

However, the spirit of social cohesion promoted by the FGD was crushed by the influence of the Cold War, as it entered into competition with the Catholic youth education organisations. The contrast between the Western and Eastern blocs was symbolically reflected in Italy by the division between the Catholic Scout movement (re-established after the war) and the Pioneers Association of Italy (Associazione Pionieri d'Italia – API), born in 1950 in Milan on the back of the associative model adopted internationally by the communist movement. The API would end up being strongly opposed by the Catholic Church and the Italian Catholic party, Christian Democracy (Democrazia Cristiana – DC) due to its atheist pedagogical orientation bound to communist culture. As a result, the API never became a mass organisation like in communist countries and disbanded in 1960. Catholic youth education in Italy could, however, count also on the Italian Youth for Catholic Action (Gioventù Italiana di Azione Cattolica (GIAC) which, thanks to its continued presence among young

people even during the fascist regime, during the Second World War represented "the largest organisation of Italian Catholic laity and, at the same time, one of the strongest youth movements in the country" (Boscato 2011: 249).

An emblematic example of such political and cultural conflicts is represented by the establishment of the Italian Recreational and Cultural Association (Associazione Ricreativa Culturale Italiana – ARCI), an organisation that would involve an increasing number of young people, particularly from the late 1960s. This would develop in the face of an attitude of hostility from the Catholic party DC over the influence of the Left in the local workers' clubs of the National Body for the Assistance to Workers (Ente Nazionale Assistenza ai Lavoratori – ENAL), the organisation that had inherited the assets and functioning of the National Action for Work (Opera Nazionale Lavoro – ONL) programme from the fascist regime (Degl'Innocenti 2012). Taking into account the incompatibility with the Catholic position, therefore, leftist clubs were to break away from ENAL and move towards the new ARCI, which also incorporated API and the Italian Union Sport for All (Unione Italiana Sport Per tutti – UISP).

From the 1960s to the early 21st century

After the experiences of participation shared by young people and adults during the resistance and the post-war reconstruction period, the 1950s was dominated by an increasing cultural climate of adultism. Avoiding any possible sources of intergenerational conflict seemed to be one of the main concerns of the new democratic order. This period has been described as one of "darkness, conformist and hierarchical in relations between the sexes, between classes, between generations; young people were repressed in their customs, sexuality and divided in culture" (Dogliani 2003: 182).

In this climate, young people began to claim the right to be recognised as an active "social subject". Urban life and factory work were seen as an opportunity for "psychological emancipation from parental constraints and the uncertainty of day work labour in agriculture" (Cruciani 2011: 346). Inspired by new cultural stimuli from over the Alps (e.g. American youth lifestyle, works of literature by British "angry young men"), an emerging youth culture contributed to the process of secularisation of Italian culture.

The student protests of the late 1960s were an expression of the generational divide that had arisen during the previous decade, but political parties, governments, the family, schools and economic players showed little willingness to change. The new youth culture arising from the student movement forcefully claimed the right to participate in decision making ("participatory democracy") by young people seen as individuals and as a social group; this was a vision of life based on values of self-realisation and the desire to build a personal and collective youth identity (including through the instrumental use of the new products of mass culture). Anti-authoritarianism became the watchword of this new culture, where institutions (above all, schools) came to be seen as agents of the reproduction "of bourgeois values such as authority, order, meritocracy, respectability" (Dal Toso 1995: 85).

The climate of violence that would follow during the 1970s as well as a sense that the ideals pursued by the youth movement of 1968 had failed pushed youth associations

towards a cultural shift, from the "transcendent" (political or religious) to "secularity". The rejection of totalitarian ideologies during the 1980s and 1990s was nevertheless accompanied by a more "secular" recovery and reinterpretation of those ideologies that had historically characterised each association, and on which they continued to base their identity. Sociological studies have highlighted how the value of identity based on a specific ideology continued to act as a factor of selectivity and enclosure during the 1980s (Dal Toso 1995).

Ideological or religious pluralism is a value that, at least in principle, seems to have been widely accepted from the 1990s onwards. However, out-of-school education spaces not conditioned by a specific ideological adhesion as well as based on free-choice learning principles would seem to be particularly lacking in the varied and in many ways elusive archipelago of youth education in Italy. The launch of a public policy for youth educational spaces in the 1980s was perhaps an attempt to respond to such a deficiency.

The beginnings of a public policy in the youth sector

Following the attempt of the fascist regime to create a system of mass youth education, during the Second World War educational activities conducted outside of school returned mainly to the sphere of associations. Direct intervention of the state would resume between the 1970s and 1980s in the social policies of local authorities, focusing on the preventive or reparative areas of youth issues (Bazzanella 2010). This occurred, for example, with the youth projects (Progetti Giovani) and, soon after, with the youth aggregation centres (Centri di Aggregazione Giovanile – CAG) funded by Law 285/1997 on provisions for the promotion of rights and opportunities for childhood and adolescence.

Educational work in these new public youth centres appears predominantly focused on objectives of prevention and control of youth problems, according to the notion that young people should primarily be supported during their transition to adulthood.

A phase of youth policy more oriented towards objectives of youth empowerment and emancipation was launched in Italy in 2006 with the establishment of the first Ministry of Youth and the creation of a national fund for youth policies. Increased powers granted to the regions in the field of youth policy also stimulated new programming directed towards overcoming the fragmentation and localism of educational work in youth centres or in the voluntary sector at a municipal level. New youth policy interventions began to build upon principles of co-operation among the central government, regions and organisations operating in the youth sector.

This has led to financing of the development of new public youth spaces under third sector management, such as the Youth Urban Labs (Laboratori Urbani Giovanili) in Puglia (Morciano et al. 2013; Morciano 2015a), Urban Vision (Visioni Urbane) in Basilicata and the Art Lab (Officine dell'arte) in Lazio. The uniqueness of these spaces is represented by their attempt to provide learning experiences closely connected with practice and explicitly focused on interests, motivations, passions and projects for young people. An underlying principle is the attempt to diversify the offer and develop opportunities for the active use of the spaces, ranging from the cultivation

of hobbies to the realisation of business-oriented projects. These new centres there-fore tend to develop as incubators of new projects of youth initiative through the internal creation of a hub of diverse tangible and intangible resources (equipment, information, relationship networks, learning experiences, etc.).

These experiences of centre-based youth work, however, are now confronted with drastic cuts to the public funding dedicated to youth policies. Indeed, following the allocation of €130 million during the first two years (2006-07), the National Fund for Youth Policy budget has steadily decreased, reaching €13 million in 2014. Furthermore, the Ministry of Youth was abolished in 2011, ushering in the present situation of a weak focus on youth policies.

The ongoing challenge for these new youth centres, therefore, is that of breaking away from a dependence on public funding through the diversification of sources of finance (the sale of products or services, identifying donors and sponsors, public commissioning, crowdfunding, etc.), while avoiding management geared towards the market that could put their social mission at risk.

The lack of national support reflects a legislative vacuum in national youth policy, including public regulation of the specific professional figure of the youth educator. Various regulated professions in the sphere of education (e.g. the professional edu-cator, socio-cultural educator, community worker, social worker) are still not focused on young people, while experience in the field remains the only viable pathway for specialising in youth work. This shortage seems indicative of how a vision still prevails in Italy of youth work understood as work based mainly on voluntary and "front line" reparative activity (thus focused only on young people at the margins), out-of-school education oriented towards a specific ideology (religious or political), or the ability to plan and implement projects financed by EU youth policy programmes. The creation of a professional youth worker whose youth training and certification is regulated by the state on the basis of specific accreditation systems is a challenge that the various associations and youth centres in Italy are still struggling with (Bazzanella 2010; Dunne et al. 2014).

Past to present

In the religious sphere, the most widely disseminated educational spaces in Italy are currently Catholic parish oratories, where religious education is combined with recreational activities and initiatives in social volunteering. The Oratories National Forum (Forum Nazionale Oratori – FOI) was established in 2009 in order to support the development of the 6 500 Catholic oratories across the country.[37] Specific areas dedicated to the education of adolescents and young people are found within Catholic Action (Azione Cattolica – AC), the oldest Catholic association in Italy (founded in 1867), present in almost every diocese (219 of 226) and with 360 000 members. The largest Scout association in Italy, AGESCI, also has an explicit Catholic orientation, with more than 180 000 members. Conversely, the CNGEI is explicitly anchored to the principles of secularism and now numbers 12 000 members.[38]

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37. See www.oratori.org, accessed 11 March 2017.
38. See www.cngei.it, accessed 11 March 2017.

Among youth Catholic associations, a clearer orientation towards political commitment is represented by the Youth of ACLI (Giovani delle ACLI), a movement still active in the Catholic union, the Italian Christian Association of Workers (Associazione Cristiana dei Lavoratori Italiani – ACLI).[39] Finally, a significant Catholic presence can also be identified in not-for-profit welfare services for young people. A census by the Italian Episcopal Conference (Conferenza Episcopale Italiana – CEI) revealed that ecclesiastical institutions that manage health, social care and education facilities in Italy numbered 14 241 in 2011, almost 40% of the non-profit organisations in the same sector (36 010).[40]

While Scout organisations and Catholic youth associations are traditionally oriented to personal development or character-building objectives, ARCI is one of the largest national secular networks of reformist cultural spaces engaged on a political and social level. ARCI defines itself as the "heir to a tradition and a long history of mutual association, that of the popular and anti-fascist movements that helped build and consolidate democracy founded on the Italian Constitution".[41] In 2011, it counted 4 987 local branches, of which 21% (1 020) were youth associations (Monticelli, Pincella and Bassoli 2011). In 2013, ARCI had 1 115 747 members (ARCI 2013).

The thematic area of "New generations and youth creativity" is part of the national ARCI work groups (along with culture, welfare, immigration, law, the Mafia, the environment, peace and international co-operation). ARCI has not developed an educational tradition explicitly aimed at young people; the awareness of the educational value of a significant portion of its activities began to mature recently, as of 2013. Indeed, as noted in an annual report, ARCI has also begun to consider itself an association possessing "a strong inter-generational nature that was never really put into focus, let alone valued".

Explicitly educational associations involving teenagers and young people also include Arciragazzi, founded in 1983 and federated with ARCI. Arciragazzi has around 80 affiliated clubs in almost all Italian regions, in addition to 10 social co-operatives for the management of foster homes for children and adolescents, educational services and training.[42]

The youth culture of opposition towards institutions and criticism of the dominant models of economic development from the 1970s to today has found one of its main areas of continuity in self-managed social centres. The specific features of these spaces include self-management, autonomy from institutions, employment and reuse of public spaces for activities ranging from cultural production to social commitment. Although primarily born from radical leftist movements, there are also social centres of the right, such as those that gave rise to the Casa Pound political movement of the extreme right.[43]

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39. See www.acli.it/le-acli/soggetti-sociali-e-professionali/giovani-delle-acli, accessed 11 March 2017.
40. Industry and Services Census, 2011, Italian National Institute of Statistics, available at www.istat.it, accessed 11 March 2017.
41. Available at www.arci.it, accessed 11 March 2017.
42. See www.arciragazzi.it, accessed 11 March 2017.
43. See www.casapounditalia.org, accessed 11 March 2017.

Hurley and Treacy's work (1993) helps in classifying, from a sociological perspective, the different practices of youth work through history in Italy. Based on the historical reconstruction detailed in this article, Figure 3 offers examples of youth work practices in Italy oriented to social change (reformist or revolutionary) or to social regulation objectives (liberal or conservative).

Figure 3: Models of youth work practices in Italy, based on Hurley and Treacy (1993), as summarised by Cooper (2012)
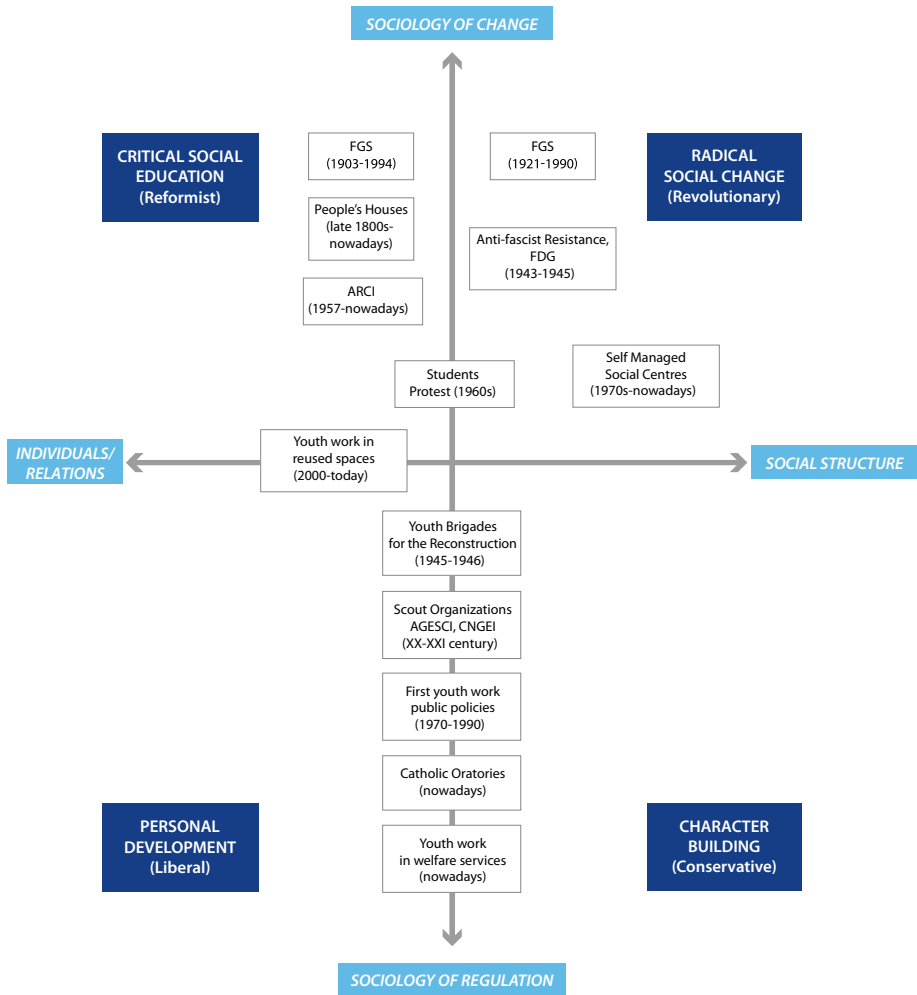
Conclusion

Except for the unique youth education system created by the fascist regime, youth work in Italy has never been part of an organic public policy at national level. Resistance would seem to have been nourished by two key events apparently not yet metabolised: on one hand, the totalitarian projects of the fascist regime and its experiment of state mass youth education; on the other, the student protests of 1968 and the inability of the state to address its demands for change.

The tendency to support a pluralistic private offer of association-based youth work appeared, therefore, to provide a way to prevent the risk of exposing public institutions to new totalitarian youth education political programmes, such as that created by fascism. On the other hand, the public funding of youth work spaces or projects managed by private associations from the early 1980s seems also a strategy to contain those forces of youth protest inherited from the youth movements of the 1960s, having repressed their violent expression during the so-called Years of Lead (the 1970s). Actually, as noted by Neri Serneri (2011), the students' protest was often associated with terrorist violence during the 1970s. The state therefore began supporting non-profit youth work spaces and projects on the condition that the need for change as expressed by young people be at least embedded into reformist routes.

Following the development of the youth education system by the fascist regime, the only direct state intervention in the youth work field in Italy has been that established by local welfare policies, focused on the prevention of youth problems. After the short period of the national youth policy supporting the regions in new programmes strongly committed to youth participation and values of social emancipation, youth policy in Italy has returned to a condition of uncertainty, with low public funding and a strong dependence on local initiatives. Many new youth spaces funded from 2006 by the regions now face the challenge of mobilising new, non-public funding sources, as well as developing new forms of co-operation with businesses.

Neither public intervention, nor the incentives of the European Commission and the Council of Europe, seem to have yet generated a thrust strong enough to identify a possible convergence for the profession of the youth worker in terms of skills, an ethical value base, specific outcomes and working process, and professional and educational standards (Morciano and Scardigno 2014). Instead, internal training of educators prevails (as in the sphere of Catholic associations), or a tendency towards non-clarification or denial of educational aims, often motivated by the desire to avoid an asymmetry in the relationship between adults and young people (as may be often seen in reformist associations of the secular sphere). This general attitude causes difficulties when research aims to "identify the pedagogical choices that guide the internal life of associations" working in the youth sector (Dal Toso 1995: 286). Despite participation in associations continuing to significantly influence the free time of young people (Istituto Giovanni Toniolo 2014), Italy still lacks evaluative research (Morciano 2015b) on the effects that participation in youth work can have on the life paths of young people.

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Appendix: acronyms in text

API: Associazione Pionieri d'Italia (Pioneers Association of Italy)

ARCI: Associazione Ricreativa Culturale Italiana (Italian Recreational and Cultural Association),

ASCI: Associazione Scautistica Cattolica Italiana (Italian Catholic Scout Association)

CAG: Centri di Aggregazione Giovanile (Youth Aggregation Centres)

CNGEI: Corpo Nazionale dei Giovani Esploratori (National Body of Youth Scouts)

DC: Democrazia Cristiana (Christian Democracy)

ENAL: Ente Nazionale Assistenza ai Lavoratori (National Body for Assistance to Workers)

FDG: Fronte della Gioventù per l'Indipendenza Nazionale (Youth Front for National Independence)

FGC: Federazione Giovanile Comunista (Communist Youth Federation)

FGS: Federazione Giovanile Socialista (Socialist Youth Federation),

FOI: Forum Nazionale Oratori (Oratories National Forum)

GIAC: Gioventù Italiana di Azione Cattolica (Italian Youth for Catholic Action)

GIL: Gioventù Italiana del Littorio (Littorio's Italian Youth)

GUF: Gruppi Universitari Fascisti (Fascist University Groups)

ONB: Opera Nazionale Balilla (National Balilla Action)

ONL: Opera Nazionale Lavoro (National Action for Work)

REI: Ragazzi Esploratori Italiani (Italian Boy Scouts)

UISP: Unione Italiana Sport Per tutti (Italian Union Sports for All)

Chapter 9

Above the horizon – Shifting landscapes in youth work in Malta

Miriam Teuma

Introduction

The concept and practice of youth work has both supporters and detractors. In emphasising the positive aims, values, methods and benefits of youth work, theorists and practitioners in the field are often inclined to be defensive when faced with challenges to these perceived positives. Questioning the value and benefits of youth work is not new and often takes on a familiar pattern: youth work is aspirational, indeed idealistic, while vague in its aims and objectives; it is poor in methodology and lacking in coherent structures; it lacks capacity to meet all young people's needs and aspirations; it lacks professional competence; and it is difficult to evaluate its outcomes. While not considering the merits or demerits of these challenges, I want in this chapter to focus on two in particular: lack of professional competence and difficulty in evaluating outcomes. These in turn give rise to two corollary challenges to traditional youth work practice: standardisation and professionalisation.

Recent developments in Malta in the areas of professionalisation and standardisation afford us some insights into how perceived challenges to the traditional values and benefits associated with youth work can be addressed and accommodated without undermining the essence of these values and benefits.

Youth work as a profession in Malta

The Youth Work Profession Act 2014 gives[44] formal professional recognition and status to youth workers, regulates the profession and determines the qualifications and conditions under which youth workers can acquire such recognition. The Act provides for a Youth Work Profession Board to regulate youth work and eligibility to

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44. Youth Work Profession Act, No. XX of 2014.

practise it in Malta. The board has established a code of ethics for the professional behaviour of youth workers, following a consultation with relevant stakeholders.

The Act is one of a range of measures being advanced by the Government of Malta to promote youth work and non-formal education and to strengthen the professional capacity of the youth work sector.

Professionalisation has long been a feature of education. The teaching profession is well established and respected worldwide. In more recent times, professionalisation has also spread to other services such as counselling. However, one area in which professionalisation has been slow in developing is youth work. While youth work emerged as a social and educational activity for young people in the late 19th century, its accreditation and recognition as a profession has lagged behind its overall development and impact. This can be accounted for, in part, by the definition of what youth work is and what it is meant to do.

Malta's recent National Youth Policy – Towards 2020, describes youth work as:

> a planned learning programme, project or activity aimed at the personal, social and political development of young people based on their voluntary participation and on mutually respectful and supportive relationships between young people and adults and built on strong working relationship between the individual young person and youth workers.[45]

All young people:

> should be respected, valued and listened to and be supported and encouraged in building fulfilling personal and social relationships and in developing their innate abilities and talents for the benefit of themselves, their communities and society.

The policy's values are those of respect, recognition, sustained support and solidarity based on principles of responsiveness, access, participation, inclusion, integration, diversity, empowerment and equality. Youth work focuses on young people at the particular stage in their lives when they are developing their awareness, seeking answers and beginning to explore their beliefs, values and choices.

The role of the youth worker is to nurture this process of development by helping young people to build self-esteem and self-confidence; develop the ability to manage personal and social relationships; promote learning and develop new skills; and build the capacity of young people to consider risk, make reasoned decisions and take control of their own lives as well as to develop a "world view" that widens horizons and invites social commitment.

Over the past 20 years, youth workers in Malta have been seeking to develop a professional identity of their own: an ethos and an ethic that is particular to a discipline, as opposed to being considered an offshoot of social work, youth voluntary work, or sports and recreation activities. The Malta Federation of Professional Associations

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45. "Registered youth worker" or "youth worker" means a person who is registered in the official register of youth workers kept by the Youth Work Profession Board and who has been granted a licence to practise the profession of youth worker, in accordance with Article 6 of the Youth Work Profession Act, 2014.

defines a profession as a disciplined group of individuals who adhere to ethical standards and processes; are accepted by the public as possessing special knowledge and skills in a widely recognised body of learning derived from research, education and training at a high level; and who are prepared to exercise this knowledge and these skills in the interest of others. In 1992, the University of Malta established an Institute of Youth Studies to provide training for those who wished to pursue a professional career in youth work. The first group of graduate students founded the Maltese Association of Youth Workers (MAY) in 1998, which succeeded in becoming recognised as a professional association by the Malta Federation of Professional Associations in 2003. As a result, youth workers have been represented in government consultations, along with other professionals, on the development of relevant policy areas.

These and other developments, including the increasing focus on youth work and related issues at EU level, the development of national youth policies and, in particular, the establishment in 2011 of Aġenzija Żgħażagħ, the National Youth Agency, provided a coherent policy and administrative framework for the formal recognition of youth work as a profession.

However, professionalisation has also raised concerns as to how it will affect what are perceived as the more traditional and accepted forms of youth work. These concerns have been voiced, in particular, by youth organisations such as the Boy Scouts, the Girl Guides and Youth Catholic Action that embody the "tried and tested" methods and values of youth work. It also raises the question of how professionalisation sits with the vision, values, principles and methods outlined in the new National Youth Policy – Towards 2020. Is professionalisation a Trojan Horse that threatens to undermine the values and methods of youth work, or can it open up new opportunities for youth work that create new possibilities without sacrificing its core values?

Recent related developments in the youth field in Malta may provide us with some possible responses to these questions.

Youth.inc: an alternative learning programme

Youth.inc is an inclusive education programme, based on applied learning, for young people between the ages of 16 and 21. These young people have completed full-time compulsory education but are often without qualifications and are not in education, training or employment before entering the programme. The aim of the programme is to help young people to improve their standard of education and gain more knowledge, values and skills to enable them to enter the labour market or gain qualifications to continue in further education and/or training. The programme employs what are described as "support youth workers" to ensure that the young people are actively engaged in the learning process, and they are also responsible for supervising the validation of learning.

While the programme has operated in Malta since 2011, it came under the remit and management of Aġenzija Żgħażagħ in the summer of 2014. This was to facilitate a more youth-centred approach that seeks to strengthen the complementary roles of formal and non-formal learning through effective youth work practices and values.

In assuming responsibility for the programme, Aġenzija Żgħażagħ was also delegated authority by the Council for Higher and Further Education to accredit the programme at Level 1 and Level 2 of the Malta Qualifications Framework. Thus, Aġenzija Żgħażagħ became an accrediting agency not only with regard to Youth.inc but also other youth work-related programmes. Effectively, Aġenzija Żgħażagħ, as the National Youth Agency, was empowered to evaluate outcomes and award accreditations.

Youth.inc is based on the idea that success can be achieved by young people if they are engaged and motivated to participate actively in an applied learning environment that is practical in its approach. This applied learning approach is based on experiential learning and is tailored to young people who prefer a more practical style of learning. One of the key attractions of this type of learning is that young people are given the opportunity to apply their learning in the context of real-life situations and challenges. The focus is on the problem-solving process, the use of resources, personal skills, occupational awareness and safety, and work experience. The applied learning also provides learners with tasks and situations, and includes applications of knowledge, career awareness and exploration, and the integration of industrial knowledge and practices into their work. It thus provides multiple ways for young people to demonstrate their knowledge and skills.

Youth.inc is currently being offered as a full-time Level 1 and Level 2 programme by Aġenzija Żgħażagħ. A Level 3 course is planned for the future and learners will gain a diploma if they successfully complete all three levels of the programme. There are also plans to offer the programme on a part-time basis, depending on the flexibility and availability of young people in fulfilling the training and study requirements of the programme.

Youth.inc is described as an alternative learning programme, but it is a formal one, with a standardised curriculum; it comprises a full-time validated programme of two years' duration leading to Level 1 and 2 qualifications under the Malta Qualifications Framework; it is compulsory in the sense that maintenance grants are dependent on attendance; its aims might be described as utilitarian. It is a learning environment seemingly far removed from that of youth work.

However, since coming under the remit of Aġenzija Żgħażagħ a number of significant developments have taken place that point to a possible new role for youth workers as professionals.

Under Aġenzija Żgħażagħ, the number of course options available to young people on the programme has been considerably widened. While core curriculum subjects such as English, Maltese, Applied Maths and Basic IT Skills remain in place along with the development of core competences, the range of optional courses for young people has now been expanded to include animal care, auto electricals, beauty care, cooking, fretwork, electronics, entrepreneurship, hairdressing, social care, home cooking, cake decoration, nutrition and health, building and construction, fashion design, music production, photography, web design, upholstery, art, customer care and sales techniques. The variety and range of course options will continue to be expanded.

All these course options adopt a hands-on and project-based approach. They aim to provide young people on the programme with as many options and experiences of real working life as possible. The widening of the range of course options available to young people on the programme has had a number of consequences, three of which are worth noting here.

First, one of the consequences of this expanded programme is that the more formal and standardised timetable that characterised the programme previously has given way to a more individualised personal learning programme for each young person.

Second, course content is increasingly being delivered by external professionals/practitioners from the world of work, be they chefs, mechanics, photographers, electricians, hairdressers, nutritionists, builders, animal carers, salespeople or beauticians, etc. These professionals/practitioners are not teachers or educators as such. They bring with them the daily realities and routines of the world of work, with its demands, pressures, disciplines, responsibilities and rewards.

Third, the role and work of the youth support workers, now designated simply as youth workers, has undergone fundamental change. Previously, the role of the youth support worker was that of evaluator as much as it was that of mentor. They were effectively responsible for overseeing vocational work placements and organising voluntary activities.

With the advent of a wider range of course options being delivered by external professionals/practitioners and a more personalised and individualised learning programme, the youth worker has increasingly become a facilitator, a mediator and a negotiator between young people seeking knowledge and professionals/practitioners who have such knowledge. The focus of their work has shifted to building supportive relationships with young people, engaging with them to help them discover their strengths and weaknesses and encouraging them to map and pursue future career and learning paths.

What this process has revealed is the demanding, difficult and often uncharted landscape between young people – often socially and economically excluded, at risk, with poor levels of educational attainment – and the realities, demands, disciplines and responsibilities of the world of education, training and work. The process has also revealed how the values and practices of youth work can play a vital and constructive role in helping to bridge this gap.

Conclusion

A cross-sectoral approach to youth-related issues as well as the validation of non-formal and informal learning have become significant features of the European youth policy landscape.

The overall objectives of the renewed framework for European co-operation in the youth field (2010-2018)[46] are to:

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46. Council of the European Union Resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018).

- create more and equal opportunities for all young people in education and in the labour market;
- promote the active citizenship, social inclusion and solidarity of all young people.

In achieving these objectives, a dual approach is to be adopted involving the development and promotion of:
- specific initiatives in the youth field: policies and actions specifically targeted at young people in areas such as non-formal learning, youth work, mobility and information;
- mainstreaming initiatives: initiatives to enable a cross-sectoral approach where due account is taken of youth issues when formulating, implementing and evaluating policies and actions in other policy fields that have a significant impact on the lives of young people.

The main fields of action in which initiatives are to be taken are: education and training, employment and entrepreneurship, health and well-being, participation, voluntary activities, social inclusion, youth and the world, and creativity and culture.

The Council of the European Union's Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning (2012)[47] states that:

> [t]he validation of learning outcomes, namely knowledge, skills and competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning can play an important role in enhancing employability and mobility, as well as increasing motivation for lifelong learning, particularly in the case of the socio-economically disadvantaged or the low-qualified.

The recommendation calls on member states to establish systems by 2018 that allow individuals to identify, document, assess and certify/validate all forms of learning in order to use this learning for advancing their career and for further education and training.

What is absent in these approaches to policy and its implementation is the role of youth work and youth workers. Under the renewed framework for European co-operation in the youth field, "supporting and developing youth work should be regarded as cross-sectoral issues". But it is a restricted one: "Youth work belongs to the area of 'out-of-school' education, as well as specific leisure time activities managed by professional or voluntary youth workers and youth leaders and is based on non-formal learning processes and on voluntary participation." Youth workers are only referred to on three occasions in the Council recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

Recent experience in Malta points to a much broader and more crucial role for youth workers as professionals. If cross-sectoral approaches to youth-related policy issues are to be effective, particularly with regard to young people at risk and those with fewer opportunities, and if young people are to be effectively supported in gaining

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47. Council of the European Union Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

accreditation for non-formal and informal learning, then the values and methods of youth work are a crucial ingredient. In its work as an accrediting agency, Aġenzija Żgħażagħ is ensuring that the outcomes of effective youth work are evaluated and formally recognised. Recognition and parity of esteem among their fellow professionals/practitioners is essential for youth workers if cross-sectoral approaches are to be successful.

The values and methods of youth work have a vital role to play in encouraging young people to build better lives and futures, be they in or out of school, unemployed or in the workplace. To achieve this youth workers, youth leaders and volunteers need to look to the horizon to meet new challenges and possibilities.

Chapter 10

Supporting development and integration of young people – Trends in current youth work practice in Poland

Ewa Krzaklewska

Introduction

Youth work in Poland in recent years has been characterised by a diversity of forms, bottom-up initiatives and decentralisation, but limited representation or recognition. Typical youth work comprises organisations and movements, youth centres and some additional ad hoc activities. It is directed towards social development and educational aims, but the second important area is prevention activities or measures aiming at the reintegration of young people. On one hand, the decentralisation of youth work leads to rather low visibility. On the other hand, the flourishing of bottom-up initiatives and extensive local initiative demonstrates much potential and testifies to the richness of competences in the field as well as remarkable engagement. More investment, however, is needed.

How is youth work understood and practised?

It is very hard to conceptualise youth work in Poland since there is no commonly accepted definition, or even a concept that could be used in the Polish context to mean "youth work". *Praca z młodzieżą*, which is the direct translation of youth work, is sometimes used in youth policy documents as a translation of the term used at EU level, but it can be misleading as the word *praca* strongly connotes paid employment, and is also linked with social work (*praca socjalna*). In fact much of youth work is

deeply rooted in social work and its paradigm and methods. Ultimately, there is no common empirical understanding of youth work other than that represented by a pool of diverse practices. One would list youth centres or youth clubs as obvious examples, followed by youth organisations and movements. The diversity of forms of youth work is recognised in Poland, as it is at the European level, but there is no movement to integrate them. At the same time, networks integrating some types of youth work are developing, such as the Polish Council of Youth Organisations (Polska Rada Organizacji Młodzieżowych),[48] a national-level umbrella for 36 youth organisations; the Organisation for Street Work Associations in Poland (Ogólnopolskie Stowarzyszenie Organizacji Streetworkerskich);[49] or more regional networks of youth organisations such as Network Synergia[50] or Atomy.[51] This suggests the need for knowledge exchange.

The twofold aim of youth work in Poland is rather clear: while European documents describe youth work as aiming at the personal and social development of a young person, and this remains valid in Poland, the second aim of youth work in Poland is the socio-therapeutic and integrative aspect. Youth-oriented institutions are expected to step in where family or community fall short and support youth care and education. This twofold aim of youth work in Poland was explicated in a report for the European Commission, which concluded that stakeholders in Poland define youth work as:

> educational and upbringing activities, both formal and non-formal, based on voluntary participation of young people, covering areas such as education, upbringing, welfare, prevention, culture, rehabilitation, sports etc.;

> compensatory measures, carried out on a regular basis, which aim to level the social deficiencies of young people and address certain problems they face (e.g. pathologies, addictions, unemployment).

> (2012: 1)

In fact an analysis of the programmes of many youth centres, or youth work networks, strengthens this argument. Many support young people in their development and learning through the organisation of activities in their free time (hobbies, sports and other educational or cultural activities) that are mostly based on group work, but at the same time concentrate on psychological and therapeutic support more directed towards individuals. Additionally, youth centres or day care centres are often close partners of schools, playing an important role in supporting the education of children and paying attention to improving their school performance. Some youth centres offer meals for children as well.

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48. See www.prom.org.pl, accessed 11 March 2017.
49. See www.osos.org.pl, accessed 11 March 2017.
50. See Network Synergia in the Świętokrzyskie Region, available at www.siecsynergia.pl, accessed 11 March 2017.
51. See Network of Youth Organisations in the Warmińsko-Mazurkie Region, available at www.atomywsieci.pl, accessed 11 March 2017.

The twofold aims of youth work can be discerned clearly in the practice of publicly funded institutions for children and young people – day care centres (*placówka wsparcia dziennego*) – even if the reintegrative function prevails as a paradigm. The functioning of day care centres is regulated by the 2011 Law on supporting family and the foster care system. This defines the criteria for opening up a day care centre, criteria for the staff and very basic criteria for the work programme.

There are three types of working methods in day care centres. First, there are day-care support centres supporting childcare and education, and providing help in studying, leisure activities, fun and sports, and interest development. Second, there are specialised care centres organising socio-therapeutic activities, correction, compensation and speech therapy. And third, there are centres that deliver individual support (correction) programmes or psychoprophylactics, in particular pedagogic therapy, psychotherapy or socio-therapy; and street work – focused on animation and socio-therapy. The pressure in fact on the prevention aspects leads to day care centres being associated with social services directed towards disadvantaged and underprivileged young people. There is also a possibility that a child will be directed to the day care centre by the decision of a court, which raises questions about the voluntary character of youth work. Still, many of the day care centres are open to all youth who want to participate in their activities. In 2014, there were 1 558 such institutions run by both local government or outsourced to NGOs, including many church-related ones. The most popular are day-support centres (about 75%) followed by the specialised care centres (about 20%). A Ministry for Work and Social Policy report states that some 38 000 children had participated in the activities of those centres (MPIPS 2015).

It is important to add that there are many youth clubs (*kluby młodzieżowe, świetlice środowiskowe, świetlice wiejskie*) that are not governed by the regulations concerning day care centres – they are created on the basis of local or regional laws and driven by local community as well as external funding, for instance from the EU. These clubs, as well as other youth organisations in which participation is fully voluntary or other state-run institutions that concentrate on leisure-time activities, particularly sports and culture, are therefore often not associated with youth social work. They are open to all young people no matter their social or material situation, and often have their own thematic approach and specific aims. It is critical to develop such activities further in Poland. As stressed in a report from young leaders working in the field, the ideal youth centre should give young people the possibility to develop their creativity and interests, create bonds among themselves and with the local community, and be open to all young people no matter what their background and age (Fundacja Farma 2015).[52]

In summary, then, there is a split in the work of organisations and institutions in Poland. To one side we have youth organisations that are open to all children and young people, based on voluntary work, characterised by bottom-up initiatives, and often created on the basis of NGO legislation. At the other end, we have day care centres that are part of the national social work programme, targeted towards

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52. Many youth centres are directed only at young children, resulting in lack of space for teenage girls and boys as well as young people aged 18 and over.

disadvantaged children (up to 18 years old), with professional workers, including specialists. Figure 4 suggests that some merging of these two perspectives has occurred. The youth centres or day care centres are becoming more open to the wider community, engaging volunteers, and trying to integrate youth of diverse backgrounds. On the other hand, the youth organisations are also becoming much more professionalised and engaged in receiving public, also European, funding. However, the role of the youth worker remains different in the two strands of youth work; the youth worker is more of an educator in the youth centres, while with the open youth work of the organisations the youth workers are more involved in organising activities (Matyjaszczyk 2015). Again, the importance of empowering young people and engaging them in activities is spreading across youth work, strengthening the role of youth worker as an *animateur*, inspiring young people's participation, rather than educator.

Figure 4: Twofold aims of youth work

YOUTH INITIATIVES AND ORGANISATIONS

educational-social

open

voluntary

bottom-up

self-funded

NGO legislation

youth worker as *animateur*

SOCIAL WORK WITH CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

integrative-preventive

targeted

professionalised

top-down

public funding

social work legislation

youth worker as educator
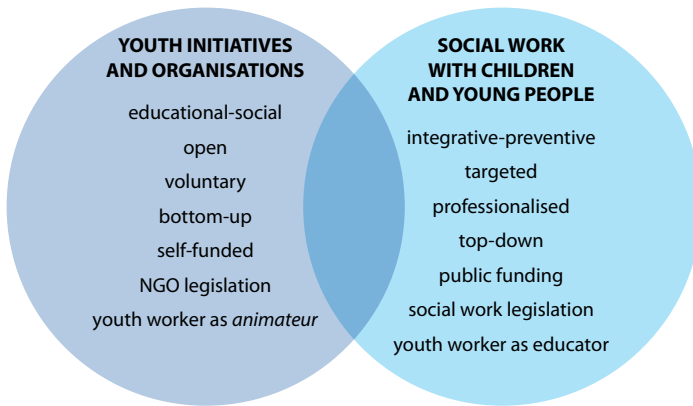
Trends in current youth work practice: the four Ps

If we look at the trends in contemporary youth work, we can see there are external demands that shape its practice while youth work itself attempts to do so from the inside. One such external demand is the demand for outcomes. As Sińczuch (2005) notes, "Contemporary youth work is subordinated to pragmatism, as it is supposed to bring particular outcomes regarding competences, skills and gaining experiences." This is not new in the social work approach to working with young people, where the integrative effect is expected, at least. But the work of youth organisations with an orientation towards the spending of leisure time through activities is now facing pressure to obtain learning outcomes. Youth organisations are seen as a space to acquire new competences or skills, as an important element of one's social but also future professional development. This is perpetuated by financial schemes that demand strict reporting and evidence of outcomes.

Personalisation of approach is a second principle, increasingly visible in the work of state-funded youth centres that stress an individual approach towards each child. While some time ago group work was a very important principle of youth work,

it seems that now targeted individual support is being added to community participation. This trend is visible in the work of, for instance, the street work organisation Rakowicka 10.[53] The main task of the programme is to conduct street work with children. Street workers make contact with children and teenagers in their own environment, offering alternative ways of spending free time through animation and pedagogical and socio-therapeutic measures, as well as the execution of joint projects with the participation of children and teenagers. Thanks to the use of street work as an operational method, they can reach those people who do not make use of the traditional forms of help and support that are provided through socio-therapeutic centres, or who are afraid or do not know how to turn to institutions for help. The approach chosen by the centre, that is the work on building the relation of trust between a street worker and a child, is a long-term and time-consuming one, but it brings measurable effects. Each child is perceived holistically (in education, health and psycho-emotional and other aspects), as well as in the context of their relations within their family. Apart from the contact with the child's family, the workers make contact with schools, carers and social workers. The personalisation can be seen also in the trend of the diversification of the "offer" made by different organisations. Young people choose an organisation according to their needs and interests. Still, while there is a diversity of available organisations in the cities, in rural areas offers are much more limited.

Partnership would be the third trend, meaning both the partnerships among organisations and institutions, and that between young people and youth workers, and the approach needed to treat young people as partners in their development and in the creation of a youth work programme. The approach taken by youth centres towards integration and support for a young person now more often involves diversified partners – which are schools, local communities, parents, and other organisations. It is seen as critical that support for a young person from diverse institutions be in a way co-ordinated to remain consistent and more effective. The principle of "going out" of the centre and participating in wider community activities is becoming much more common. It is also observed that the status of young people in organisations is slowly changing, although there is still room for improvement. The observation of village youth centres proved that there is a need to get away from a pedagogic approach and replace it with a mentor or tutor approach to stimulate youth engagement and give young people ownership of the projects or activities (Fundacja Farma 2015).

Professionalisation is the fourth trend in Poland in the youth work area. An indication is the formal inclusion of the youth worker (*pracownik młodzieżowy*) in the List of Professions and Specialisations (interestingly, without any definition).[54] This process is also linked to the engagement of diverse professional groups such as psychologists, re-educators, logopedists and pedagogues, who are involved in intervention activities with children in need. For example, the youth centre network Siemacha (which runs 10 Siemacha spots, which are youth centres open to young people from the districts of six cities) collaborates actively with the Krakow Institute of Psychotherapy, providing children and their families with professional psychological support. In fact,

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53. www.facebook.com/rakowicka10/.
54. See also Matyjasczak 2014.

therapy underpins one of the three principles of Siemacha (together with education and sport) and it is this trio of ideas that guides work with young people.

The trend towards professionalisation is also linked to the issue of quality – we observe regional and local initiatives within publicly funded youth work in setting up standards for youth work (Krzaklewska 2015). On the national level, the existing legal criteria for the creation of youth centres and evaluating youth work are rather limited and mostly concern infrastructural issues, legal dimensions or staff qualifications. But there is less guidance concerning the content of youth work, methodologies or approaches. Nevertheless, regional or city councils (e.g. Wrocław,[55] Warszawa[56]) have been engaged in creating guidelines for the enhancement of day care centres' activities. These cover, among others, programmes offered to young people, contacts with institutions, staff development and training, and the involvement of young people in the co-management of the youth centres. Furthermore, in the Region Podkarpackie, a manual for youth centre workers has been created, accompanied by set of workshops directed towards organisations running youth centres (SUWAK 2012). Guidelines are created also by youth workers in particular youth centres. The Siemacha Association, whose slogan is "Quality as a way to show respect", puts a strong emphasis on high-quality activities (with quality spaces and equipment) for children, with support from professionals.

Conclusion

The lack of a department within the Polish ministry responsible for youth policies, with direct engagement with youth policy formulation and implementation at the local level, has led to a lack of a general conceptual and strategic framework concerning youth work. There is no national-level debate on how to realise the aims of youth work. There are some initiatives such as a programme supporting the opening and functioning of youth clubs and centres[57] and the creation of an ad hoc working group for youth policy (though the working group did not achieve the creation of a new programme supporting the development of young people and youth work).[58] Nevertheless, there is a strong practice of youth work at a local and organisational level. So the observed lack of "centralisation" has resulted in the pluralisation of a "youth offer" and not an absence of a framework but in a multiplicity of frameworks.

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55. Criteria for the functioning of local youth clubs in Wrocław, see http://bip.um.wroc.pl/attachments/download/3248, accessed 11 March 2017.

56. SPOIWO (2013) evaluates the programmes of day care centres and interviews youth workers, and proposes a programme of trainings for youth workers, as well as quality standards for the functioning of day care centres.

57. The programme Świetlica-Dzieci – Praca na rzecz wsparcia dziecka i rodziny w gminie w latach 2011-2015 [Youth club – Child work for supporting children and families in a local community from 2011 to 2015], see www.mpips.gov.pl/pomoc-spoleczna/programy/programy-zatwierdzone-przez-ministra-pracy-i-polityki-spolecznej-na-lata-2011-2015/program-swietlica-8211-dzieci-8211-praca-na-rzecz-wsparcia-dziecka-i-rodziny-w-gminie-w-latach-2011-8211-2015, accessed 11 March 2017.

58. In 2014, this working group, through broad consultations with youth organisations, youth researchers and youth workers, formulated the national programme Active Youth, which has not been realised.

Such a situation proves on one hand beneficial, allowing a diversity of approaches and paradigms, but on the other hand, "reinventing of the wheel" may occur. The need for more peer-to-peer exchange and search for representation is evident. At the regional level, representatives for youth policy have endeavoured to collate and consolidate youth work practice in the area, recommending systemic changes.[59] There is a need for more investment in the employment of youth workers and local *animateurs* as well as their skills development. A more integrative approach to youth work is needed, too, which would allow the creation of more general access youth spaces. More public funding should be directed towards setting up youth centres, activities or organisations that are open to all young people from diverse backgrounds.

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59. Atomy w Sieci (2012) created a strategy for developing youth policy in the Warmia and Mazury Region.

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Chapter 11

Youth work: a Portuguese point of view

Carlos Pereira

This article aims to present a state-of-the-art definition of youth work in Portugal, addressing recent developments in the drafting of the professional profile of the youth worker.[60] It will introduce a perspective, but it can also be considered a statement in favour of youth work in solidarity with the spirit and content of the European Youth Work Conventions (Ghent 2010; Brussels 2015), particularly the final declaration of the second convention, which stated: "Youth work is not a luxury but an existential necessity if a precarious Europe is to effectively address its concerns about social inclusion, cohesion and equal opportunities, and commitment to values of democracy and human rights. Youth work is a central component of a social Europe."[61]

This chapter is structured into three complementary pillars: first, there is a short overview of "youth" as a field of action in Portugal and its relationship to non-formal education. Second, we present an account of the development of the professional profile of the youth worker or *Técnico de Juventude*, the methodology used and its main goals. Third, we describe the Portuguese model for youth work, and a brief analysis of the possible correlations between this model and key issues in the classic understanding of youth work. We conclude by addressing the importance of non-formal education as an important means of support for youth in inclusive societies, emphasising the idea of a holistic approach to active citizenship and social integration with strong roots in the notion of a global educational project.

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60. This article was delivered by IPDJ – the Portuguese Institute for Youth and Sport – in late November 2015, for official publication in the National Catalogue of Qualifications co-ordinated by the Institute for Employment and Professional Training (IEFP) and the National Agency for Qualification and Professional Education (ANQEP).
61. http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/eywc-website-final-report.

Youth and non-formal education: the starting line

In Portugal, the wide and diverse concept of youth work does not have a clear definition that captures its rich character, a fact that Jorge Queirós[62] underlined in a brief history of "youth work" in Portugal, with youth work taken as a social intervention within the broader context of socio-cultural life. However, it is clear that this concept – determined in a broad and dispersed scope of action, with its own corpus of scientific knowledge and attached to the boundaries of university legitimacy and professional practice and recognition – does not match the depth and diversity of the daily practice in the field of youth, particularly from the point of view of non-formal education, and youth work's role in lifelong education for adults.

Therefore, it is not possible to find a professional role associated with the target group "youth". Nevertheless, from this angle, a group of professional and non-professional youth workers evolve and progress in their action and influence through work for and with young people. As such, "youth" as an administrative category, and as a social construction,[63] is located between the converging dimensions of formal and non-formal education. Whether under the topic of issues concerning young people, youth projects or youth as a *de facto* empowered social partner, we can discover a common perspective on a target group, dominated by a shifting range of ages, *grosso modo*, from 12 to 35 years old.

The multiple stakeholders found in the field of "youth" – at both collective and individual levels – have numerous names and ranges of intervention. They form a complex constellation of youth organisations; student organisations; youth federations; national youth councils; scouts organisations; NGOs; environmental organisations; local or centralised public organisations, departments or services; schools; teachers; socio-cultural *animateurs*; trainers; holiday camp co-ordinators or *animateurs*; civil servants in the youth field; and so on. Nevertheless, it is from the angle of non-formal education practices and methodologies that action with and for youth as a target group appears best represented.

At institutional level, noting youth policies pursued by governments since 1974 and taking as an example the main public services attached to youth as a political matter (a history that IPDJ inherited), the objective of promotion and development of non-formal education is ever-present, even if not explicitly or publicly stated, or even defined.[64] This has always been a sort of general framework, mainly in the projects and programmes and their direct or indirect goals, as is seen in the leading examples of the funding of the activities of youth organisations or in mobility or leisure-time activities. In addition, the development of the field of youth as a governmental priority

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62. Queirós J. O. (2014), "History of youth work and youth policies in Portugal", in *The history of youth work in Europe and its relevance for today's youth work policies*, vol. 4, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, pp. 71-80, https://go.coe.int/SsYAL.

63. For a deeper understanding of the sociological concept of youth see Pais J. M. (1990), "A construção sociológica da juventude – alguns contributos", Análise Social, vol. XXV (105-06), 1990 (1, 2), 139-65.

64. See Pinto L. (2007), "Educação Não-Formal, um contributo para a compreensão do conceito e das práticas em Portugal", ISCTE, Lisbon, unpublished.

emerged from the recent political revolution, with young people addressed in the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic. The rights of young people are addressed in Article 70,[65] with a strong emphasis on youth organisations' freedom and support, favouring an approach where youth offices, training facilities, youth hostels and dedicated staff are available throughout the regions.

In the same period, progressive legislation was adopted, with the objectives of the active voice, empowerment and enhanced rights of young people and the raising of their social and educational opportunities. In this regard, youth policies were shaped over the years by concepts such as co-administration, consultative councils, transversality and participation.[66] One important milestone would be the emergence of a specific act of parliament[67] for the legal status of the Portuguese National Youth Council (created in 1985).

However, decades later, valuable social awareness of the idea of youth and the importance of non-formal education is still somewhat limited for the general public and remains attached to clusters of activity. This results in a lack of awareness by young people of their rights and opportunities for active citizenship. In addition, schools suffered deep cuts to extracurricular activities because of the pressure of austerity measures. Issues such as the economic crisis, migration, labour-market challenges, soft skills development, inclusion, participation, radicalisation and NEETs are leading us towards a renewed emphasis on the importance of a youth work project committed to non-formal approaches.

The project: on the way

Since the first European Youth Work Convention in 2010 and the recent (2012) reorganisation of the state services in the field of youth and sports, leading to the creation of the Portuguese Sports and Youth Institute, the plan of activities has targeted the development and strengthening of non-formal education as priorities.[68]

Therefore, IPDJ has been working hard with youth platforms and youth representatives, as well as fostering intense structured dialogue (e.g. the White Book on Youth project),[69] to resolve two distinct but interlinked issues:

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65. www.parlamento.pt/Legislacao/Paginas/ConstituicaoRepublicaPortuguesa.aspx.
66. Integrated youth policies can be accessed by two important references: Gabinete dos Ministros Adjunto e da Juventude (1990), *Política de Juventude, os Anos de Mudança*, Lisbon; Gabinete do Secretario de Estado da Juventude (1997), *Política de Juventudes, um ano de Mudanças*, Instituto Português da Juventude, Lisbon.
67. Law No. 1/2006 of 13 January.
68. In addition to this, two resolutions of the national parliament have strengthened the political commitment to the development of non-formal education; Resolutions 32/2013 and 34/2013 recommended the validation and recognition of the skills acquired in youth organisations and voluntary service, and also the appreciation and recognition of non-formal education.
69. The White Book on Youth was published in 2015 as a guidance tool for youth policies.

▶ on one hand, working towards the recognition and validation of the skills acquired in non-formal activities,[70] mainly regarding the enhanced value of achievements of young people actively involved in those activities (two main examples are the involvement in youth organisations and voluntary service);

▶ on the other hand, a clear definition of youth work in Portugal, including what kind of activities to place under its umbrella, which professionals to gather under the concept, and what qualification and training would bring quality and legitimacy to the activity. The aim is to create a professional profile for the youth worker which is consistent and integrated with the National Catalogue of Qualifications.

The result was a political commitment from the State Secretary for Sports and Youth (SEDJ), Mr Emídio Guerreiro, who in February 2015 formed a working group with a tight, precise schedule under the co-ordination of his cabinet, composed of members of three governmental areas (education, employment and youth); the National Agency for Erasmus+ (for non-formal education); youth worker experts; the national youth council and the National Federation of Youth Associations (FNAJ). The project was later presented at one of the regular meetings of the Consultative Council under the SEDJ presidency.

The project can be summarised through the following objectives:

▶ strengthening youth public policies on the ground, acting in a dedicated way to build young people's autonomy, promoting opportunities, pointing out options and facilitating choices;

▶ creating a community of trained, motivated and well-prepared professionals to deal with the complexity of youth issues and everyday situations with young people in the field;

▶ building a visible and recognised identity for work with youth, in particular with regard to social intervention, inclusion, citizenship and the participation of young people;

▶ enhancing opportunities for young people's social integration, employability, knowledge of opportunities and access to resources;

▶ addressing young people as individuals, through a professional who can make a difference, and also make efficient connections with other professionals and institutions in the field;

▶ promoting non-formal education and its complementarity with the formal education system;

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70. This issue and its correlation with youth work have been debated intensely on several occasions, and important contributions from young people were collected; four examples of relevance are the Journeys of Non-formal Education jointly organised by IPDJ and the National Youth Council (CNJ) in Coimbra in 2014 as part of the celebrations of the annual Youth Organisations Day (30 April), and the annual meetings of both the CNJ and National Federation of Youth Organisations (FNAJ). The subject was also debated in academic contexts such as with the partnership established following the invitation from University Nova de Lisboa Social and Human Sciences College to SEDJ/IPDJ to the conference organised under the topic "Youth and/in Literature and Society", 9-11 July 2014.

- ▶ raising the role of youth work to address youth problems and society, young people's needs, desires and multiple contexts, in a humanistic view of intervention;
- ▶ delivering concrete results after a long period of debates and contributions from young people and their representatives;
- ▶ responding to national and international recommendations on the subjects of youth work, non-formal education and youth policies guidelines.

Youth worker (*Técnico de Juventude*)

The Portuguese translation of youth worker is now *Técnico de Juventude*. If after the European Youth Work Convention held in Ghent in 2010, the plan was to search for a definition, it is now possible to say that the concept has been developed.

The responsibilities of a *Técnico de Juventude* are defined as follows: "to intervene in the conception, organisation, development and evaluation of projects, programmes and activities with and for young people, through methodologies of non-formal education, facilitating and/or promoting their citizenship, participation, autonomy, inclusion and personal, social and cultural growth".[71]

According to the rules for the creation of a profession, this is a Level 4[72] profile, and the future *Técnico de Juventude* will have to comply with an obligation of 1 125 hours of training, with 500 of those from new training modules (integrated in the National Training Catalogue) and the remaining hours taken from already existing training modules that serve other professions but were considered compatible with youth work. In addition, 100 hours will be available to choose from a range of other modules.[73] This will allow graduates to make choices according to their specific needs and provides added value for two essential features of the concept: flexibility and a holistic approach.

This profile will also interact positively with the existing legislation for voluntary service, namely as regards training needs, but also with ongoing projects, such as the renewed legislation for the activity of holiday camps and its professionals and/ or co-ordinators. In short, the *Técnico de Juventude* will be ready for action and meet the criteria for those particular fields of activity, without needing further training. From this point of view, there will be a somewhat formal boundary on youth work activity; but it will not be mandatory to be a *Técnico de Juventude* to work with and for young people, and a strong effort has been made to cover a whole range of

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71. The complete training framework, including a table of contents and the training modules list, can be found here: www.catalogo.anqep.gov.pt/Qualificacoes/Referenciais/1582 (our translation).
72. Portuguese National Qualifications Framework, a similar level to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), corresponding to the 12th grade of formal education as well as vocational training. The training framework and the building of the profile had to meet the criteria and rules that are legally required. One example of the criteria is the mandatory number of training hours determined for a professional profile to be admitted (over 1 000 hours).
73. The complete training framework, including a table of contents and the training modules list, can be found here: www.catalogo.anqep.gov.pt/Qualificacoes/Referenciais/1582.

people on the ground, both professionals and volunteers, and the rich character of multiple experiences, activities, concepts and practices in the youth field.[74] Underlying concepts of voluntary participation of young people in the scope of activity of the *Técnico de Juventude* are fundamental, as are different contexts of intervention, such as youth organisations and public services, in a voluntary or paid framework of action.

The above definition of *Técnico de Juventude* was designed with the European Youth Leaders and Youth Work portfolio project[75] as a departure point, but naturally having in mind the Portuguese context and characteristics, and also the contributions of the Portuguese youth representative platforms – the National Youth Council (CNJ)[76] and the National Federation of Youth Organisations (FNAJ).

However, a definition may seem too short to capture the whole sense of something as complex as youth work. So, what are the guidelines for the professional *Técnico de Juventude*? They are consistent with the above-mentioned objectives of the project and complement as well the presented definition.

The *Técnico de Juventude* has the following professional responsibilities: analysing issues of action with and for young people, co-operating in the definition and management of technical, logistic, training and financial resources needed in youth activities; planning, organisation, development and evaluation of youth activities; co-operating in the design and implementation of projects of intervention and development for and with youngsters, at both national and international levels; participating in the development of information and communication campaigns, both national and international, in youth field issues; promoting the international dimension of the youth field, mainly in the European, American-Iberian and the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP) frameworks.

For all, there are expectations that the *Técnico de Juventude* will become a primary reference in proposals for professionals in the youth sector, both at private and public levels, in the numerous contexts already presented.

The training framework is a crucial and mandatory part of the profile. With this in mind, the plan was to design programmes to train flexible professionals, who have a good knowledge of the youth field supported with academic ideas and data, but who are prepared to apply methods of non-formal education, empowerment and participation. These professionals will understand the importance of face-to-face contact and empathy skills, interpersonal relations and commitment to personal and group development. They could be civil servants, managing youth programmes in different areas, project managers in youth organisations or working on the ground, facilitators of opportunities and a beacon for routes to be pursued by young people, as long as it is their will to do it. As such, they must be prepared with information and up-to-date knowledge. Facing these huge challenges that make the youth worker

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74. In addition, there will be formal communication between the professional profile and national RVCC system, which legally determines the recognition of skills acquired through life experience and lifelong learning. Therefore, a "youth worker" with years of experience will have the opportunity to require recognition of that experience to achieve the professional profile.

75. www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Resources/Portfolio/Portfolio_en.asp.

76. CNJ was also responsible for the design of two of the profile training modules, namely those on the subject of non-formal education methods and youth participation.

a sort of superhero (one of the striking images that emerged in the 2nd Youth Work Convention) the training modules are designed to include appropriate content, both at the theoretical and the practical levels.

But is the profile for *Técnico de Juventude* somewhat different from what youth work stands for? Considering the flexibility of the concept, maybe this could be a very adaptable profile, ranging from a classic view (centred on young people's needs and expectations) to one centred on addressing social concerns, as suggested by Professor Howard Williamson.[77] We would say that the guiding principles presented by the European Youth Forum (EYF)[78] are mostly present in what is expected from this profile. Nevertheless, as we have stressed before, it is a concept that must cover a vast universe of people, and it confirms the complexity Lasse Siurala[79] identified in the "organisation, youth worker, young people" triangle. We would add that the generalist nature of the concept demands a professional with a world view, a political and social view of integrated youth policies and ground practices aimed at reaching all young people, and who is able to address young people's diversity. Overall, what is expected and, we would say, desired, is a strong boost in public recognition of the importance of the youth sector and non-formal education as a definitively assumed, widespread, democratic educational option, supporting integrative and socially inclusive policies for young people.

The open road: added value in the transformation of youth and social policies

The professional profile of the Portuguese youth worker was designed with the perspective of a broader scenario and the vision of building a holistic approach to youth public policy. It is consistent with structured action in revised youth and social public policies, with respect to the complexity and diversity of the situations, characteristics and needs of both individuals and groups. It cannot be an end or a solution in itself. It is certainly not a magic wand, although there is no doubt that a new profession can be a strong response and a powerful tool. In addition, taking into account the framework of the EU Youth Strategy, namely the 2010-2018 eight main guidelines, or the 2020 agenda, it may serve as an important resource for youth work to claim the significance it has earned over the past decades. It can also bring a reinforced identity, visibility and recognition to so many people who have worked for a long time in the field of youth.[80] However, extreme caution should be used because the positive outcomes expected from this profession, and certainly delivered by youth work, cannot be burdened with unrealistic expectations in terms of the huge and complex challenges faced by young people in modern societies.

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77. Williamson H. (2015), Final report of the 2nd Youth Work Convention, Brussels, p. 21.
78. European Youth Forum, youth work in the European Youth Forum and youth organisations, General Assembly / Cluj-Napoca, 20-22 November 2014.
79. Siurala L., Final report of the 2nd Youth Work Convention, Brussels, p. 25, http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/eywc-website-final-report.
80. As a complement to the professional profile, a new project phase started in order to develop a professional model of Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences (RVCC) for those who intend to be recognised as *Técnico de Juventude*, namely all those people who have been working for a long time in the youth area. It has been operational since January 2017.

The diagnosis, evaluations and conclusions of different discussions, reports and investigations on the subject of youth and the critical situation many young people face in the modern world, and notably in Europe, come to similar conclusions.[81] The number of young people at risk of social exclusion is immensely high; concepts such as NEETs have come to be frequently mentioned and the need for social cohesion has become breaking news rather than an academic topic for passionate discussion. Therefore, we emphasise the outcomes of discussions which have furthered the role of youth work in supporting young people in vulnerable situations (e.g. Conference, Malta, 2014)[82] and the guidance brought by the mapping of barriers to social inclusion (e.g. Markovic et al. 2015).

But how can this be positioned in the Portuguese context? We can shed light on this issue through the example of a solid public programme for social inclusion called Escolhas ("choices"),[83] which has important lessons to offer and is a realistic scenario for the intervention of the *Técnico de Juventude*, since youth work is already represented.

The *Escolhas* programme, the first generation of which started in 2001, is devoted to the promotion of the social integration of children and teenagers in vulnerable conditions. It is a programme endorsing social cohesion, created to promote the social inclusion of children and young people from vulnerable communities, particularly the descendants of immigrants and ethnic minorities (Calado 2014). This programme is based on a positive approach to social inclusion of young people, mainly through the promotion of human interaction and resilience (individual and from the community), reinforcing and delivering social, emotional, cognitive and ethical skills and competences, and promoting self-determination, positive identities and visions of the future. The programme, which favours networking and multilevel approaches, gains strength in the combined action for bridging (world connection), binding (community ties) and resilience (empowerment of individuals). Important outputs and results come from the strong presence of non-formal education methodologies. We highlight the following.

> ► The creation, through programme measure No. 5, of local youth organisations. Some of them were created as a result of projects in the early *Escolhas* generations, and in later years applied for subsequent support but as project promoters, thus showing a growth rooted in the community. Many of these are already in the National Record of Youth Organisations (RNAJ), and also apply for support from programmes and regular instruments of public youth policy, or even programmes such as Erasmus+. Intervention with young people is based on structured dialogue and a friendly learning environment, using "community facilitators", motivated, local, voluntary young people trained and working with local teams. Plus, these young people will now

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81. At a glance, according to EACEA (bibliography), one third of young people in the EU are at risk of social exclusion. In Portugal, according to National Institute for Statistics (INE), the risk of poverty of the general population in 2014 was 19.5%. The national figure for the number of NEET young people, aged 15-34, fourth trimester 2015, is about 312 400 (www.ine.pt).
82. http://pjp-eu.coe.int/pt/web/youth-partnership/malta-2014.
83. www.programaescolhas.pt is the official website, and the relevant data are also available in the Portuguese EKCYP network report on social inclusion, for further detailed information.

have the opportunity, if they wish, to advance through professional training as a *Técnico de Juventude*.

▶ The creation of youth assemblies as a vehicle of youth empowerment, to provide training and experience to young future leaders.

These examples show the adequacy and added value youth public policies can deliver in terms of social inclusion, promotion of diverse identities, and grounding individuals in their communities. But discussion by those in the field, by youth work experts and, decisively, by young people themselves, allow us to conclude, as a challenge for a deeper approach, that the *Técnico de Juventude*, and youth work, can:

▶ have a positive impact alongside non-formal education, and the learning-by-doing methodology, stressing the importance of being actively involved, and allowing young people to see the real outcome of their work;

▶ facilitate and enhance opportunities for an effective learning process and the building of skills and competences complementary to formal school;

▶ benefit from the positive image of youth work in its "proximity", "attachment" and "empathy", having a repairing effect on both the community and individual young people. It is not represented as being "authoritarian" or imposing a strange order or power from "outside";

▶ act as an important source of useful information that is delivered in a personalised way. They are prepared as no other professional to be a facilitator for opportunities and for the reinforcement of the choices of young people, providing "meaning" and a two-way relationship;

▶ enhance peer education, reinforcing the notion of action with and for young people, the active engagement and shared building of solutions according to needs and expectations;

▶ deepen the intervention, as with help in identifying and addressing NEETs, that so often fades and disappears in the many figures and statistics;

▶ be a valuable resource in a wider team and network intervention.

The emergence of the professional profile of youth worker was, for Portugal, one small breakthrough in youth policies. But many challenges have to be addressed, and much work is still to be done to make this a decisive step forward. And young people cannot wait, because life does not wait and this and the next generations deserve progress.

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Chapter 12

Theories and concepts of youth work in South-East Europe

Gazela Pudar Draško

Youth work is complex, but the complexity lies precisely in the flexibility of youth work with its intention to respond, as much as possible, to the needs of young people, both at the individual level and in the context of the local communities in which [the] youth work programme is implemented.

(Forum MNE, 2008)

Youth work is a recent concept in South-East Europe, although its practices precede its conceptualisation. During the socialist era, the idea of youth care was used predominantly to describe activities that promoted benefit for young people. That form of youth work was mainly executed through socialist youth organisations, whose task was to organise young people and their time outside of formal education (Krnjajić 2012). However, with the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia, the needs of youth have been largely neglected in state policies and actions. Prolonged post-socialist transformation, with its high youth unemployment rates, rendered young people very vulnerable. This economic situation has contributed to a perspective where youth work is often seen as a support mechanism for the transition of young people from education to employment.

In a rare recent analysis of youth work in South-East Europe, Bužinkić et al. (2015) mention several youth work pillars identified in Croatia that can easily be applied to the region as a whole. Taken chronologically, these pillars include: peace building (1990s), non-formal education (late 1990s, early 2000s), networking and advocating for youth policies (mid and late 2000s), and finally, structuring youth work through youth organisation projects (Bužinkić et al. 2015: 38). The authors argue that peace building and anti-war campaigns, together with human rights advocacy, initially created the platform for youth work practices. Youth projects and activities during

the Second World War and the post-war period were supported by international organisations and featured themes of reconciliation, tolerance and active citizenship (Vojnić Tujnić 2008). These activities can be seen as the trigger for renewed forms of youth work, independent from the state and political parties.

By the end of the 1990s, the focus moved slowly to what may be called the second pillar, youth work as a non-formal education platform. A number of civil society organisations invested considerable efforts into, first, activities based on the non-formal education of teachers and then of young people themselves. Such work led to the strengthening of youth involvement in community work through capacity building of youth organisations and youth leadership programmes. The third pillar refers to youth work networking for advocacy of youth policy, to foster the development and sustainability of youth organisations.

State policies did not recognise youth as a specific and vulnerable group until the mid-2000s, prioritising other policies focused on the economy, justice, social protection and formal education. During the 2000s, all the countries of South-East Europe slowly began to define strategic and legal frameworks for youth policy, within which the notion of youth work became more or less accepted, but was still not clearly defined. This is the period when umbrella organisations and networks, mostly representing the predecessors of national youth councils, were created across the region.[84]

This development could be seen in the light of European processes, where the EU and the Council of Europe fostered the recognition of youth work's importance through the adoption of several guiding documents[85] and continuous support for youth activities through European programmes. Their work, along with that of other international donors, has been key to the development of youth work in the region in the past two decades.

However, the evidence on youth work practices and development in this region remains inadequate. In spite of relatively scarce data on youth work in South-East Europe, this chapter will try to offer a comprehensive overview of the concept of youth work in the region and point to good practices in specific countries.

What do we mean by youth work?

When it comes to the recognition of youth work in the legislation and strategic documents of youth policy in South-East Europe, the situation varies from country to country.

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84. For example, the Croatian Youth Network was founded in 2002, the Youth Coalition of Serbia (later Youth Umbrella Organisation of Serbia) in 2003, and the Coalition of Youth Organizations SEGA in "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" in 2004.
85. This process started with the publishing of the White Paper on Youth in 2001, which offered the base for developing national strategic frameworks of youth policy to support youth work. It is important to mention also the Council of the European Union Resolution on Youth Work (2010) and "Pathways 2.0 towards recognition of non-formal learning/education and of youth work in Europe" (2011) as two documents directly tackling the issue of youth work in Europe.

For example, the National Youth Strategy (2006)[86] of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has not defined youth work as a concept; it is mentioned only in the list of actions fostering non-formal learning as complementary to formal education. This action is aimed at introducing a permanent university course for youth work. In Montenegro, Croatia and Albania, too, youth work is not specified in documents on youth policy. A relatively recent Council of Europe international youth policy review of Albania suggested a lack of understanding of the idea of youth work, since, in the youth strategy that prevailed at the time, "youth work" and even "non-formal education" were scarcely mentioned (Williamson 2010). A quite similar situation can be found in Kosovo,[87] where youth work has not been officially recognised, despite the adoption of the Law on Youth and the Kosovo Strategy for Youth,[88] and apparently positive developments in "recognising youth workers as potential partners in dealing with young people across a number of contexts" (Şenyuva 2012: 39).

Youth policy competences in Bosnia and Herzegovina are divided between the two federal entities, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Republika Srpska. The Law on Youth Organising of the Republika Srpska[89] defines youth work as different forms of socially beneficial work in which young people are involved and which contributes to the improvement of their position. In the Bosnia and Herzegovina federation, youth work is not defined as such, but a wider definition of "work with young people" (*rad sa mladima*) has been in use. The Law on Youth of the Bosnia and Herzegovina federation defines work with young people as planned, meaningful and intentional support to young people through their voluntary participation. This concept includes non-formal education, different activities for young people and with young people, youth counselling, programmes designed for specific groups of young people, international youth work and other types of creatively organised leisure time for young people.

Finally, the Slovenian and Serbian frameworks could be used as role models. Slovenian legislation recognised the concept of youth work through an Act on the Public Interest in Youth Sector (2010),[90] which has defined youth work as:

> an organised and target-oriented form of youth action … for the youth, within which the youth, based on their own efforts, contribute to their own inclusion in society, strengthen their competences and contribute to the development of the community. The implementation of various forms of youth work is based on the volunteer participation of the youth regardless of their interest, cultural, principle or political orientation.

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86. Available at www.sega.org.mk/web/doc/National%20Youth%20Strategy-Macedonia.pdf, accessed 11 March 2017.
87. All reference to Kosovo, whether to the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.
88. Available at www.youthpolicy.org/national/Kosovo_2009_Youth_Law.pdf and www.mkrs-ks.org/repository/docs/KOSOVO_STRATEGY_FOR_YOUTH.pdf, accessed 11 March 2017.
89. Available at: www.pm.rs.ba/publikacije/dokumenti/18-zakon-omladinskom-organizovanjurs/file, accessed 11 March 2017.
90. Available at www.ursm.gov.si/fileadmin/ursm.gov.si/pageuploads/pdf/ZJIMS/ZJIMS_ENG.pdf, accessed 11 March 2017.

In general, the Serbian national youth policy framework offers the most comprehensive and inclusive approach when it comes to youth work recognition and practices. Youth work is defined through the Law on Youth (2011):[91]

> Youth work shall mean such activities organised by and for young people, based on non-formal education, carried out in young people's free time and undertaken with the aim of improving the conditions for personal and social development of young people, in accordance with their needs and abilities, in which young people voluntarily participate.

Together with the national youth strategy and its action plan,[92] this law provides a good framework for better recognition and support for youth work practices. With the new National Youth Strategy 2015-2025, adopted in early 2015, youth work has gained even more importance and focus, since one of the specific goals of the strategy is "Improved quality and availability of youth work and ensured recognition of youth work". This document envisages a definition of youth work occupation through the new National Qualifications Framework.

It is obvious that there is no singular or harmonised definition of youth work from a regional perspective. Non-formal education, voluntary participation and the development of young people (personal and/or social aspects) are major aspects of youth work concepts, if we are to follow the legislative frameworks. However, these frameworks do not provide sufficient evidence to conclude that youth work is more developed or better implemented in the countries where legislation and strategic documents clearly recognise youth work. It only sets preconditions that can, but do not necessarily have to influence significantly the scope and real effects of youth work.

Strategic and legal frameworks in all countries envisage several mechanisms for the implementation of youth policy. Those are mainly youth councils, youth centres, youth clubs, youth organisations and civil society organisations (CSOs) focused on young people. In Serbia, there is also the specific institution of youth offices (regional and local), whose role is the implementation of the youth policy and organisation of community youth work at the regional and local level. Youth offices are to be financed from the budget of local self-government, which is seen as a good way to ensure their sustainability, especially in a context where the absence of sustainability is the general weakness of the youth sector.

Where is youth work in practice?

Reliable evidence on youth work patterns and practices across the countries of South-East Europe is lacking. Research on young people in general is neither routine nor done in comparative fashion, and research on youth work is even less frequent and limited to the ventures of CSO representatives from the youth field. Therefore, it is difficult to compare practices in the countries and point to trends in youth work in this region, with the exception of advocacy processes for the recognition of youth work.

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91. Available at www.mos.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/download-manager-files/The%20Law%20on%20Youth.pdf, accessed 11 March 2017.
92. Available at www.youthforum.org/assets/2014/10/Serbia-EN-National-Youth-Strategy.pdf and www.youthpolicy.org/national/Serbia_2009_Action_Plan_Youth_Strategy.pdf, accessed 11 March 2017.

Recognition and promotion of the youth work concept in South-East Europe has been largely supported by international organisations and institutions. When the Swedish organisation Forum Syd launched a regional initiative to set up an association for youth workers/practitioners in co-operation with partner organisations from Serbia, Montenegro, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" and Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2007, Serbia was the only country where this process was successful. The National Association of Youth Workers (Nacionalna asocijacija praktičara/ ki omladinskog rada – NAPOR) was founded in March 2009 with the aim of fostering recognition and quality assurance of the youth work at national level. Today, NAPOR has 80 full and 10 associated member organisations. In other countries in the region, several CSOs have also endeavoured to achieve recognition and professionalisation of youth work at the national level, but without a specific association of youth workers.

The lack of standards gives rise to different understandings of the main purpose and aim of youth work, and leaves space for quality variations in practice (NAPOR 2010). Despite the strong presence of youth work in the field, a central goal of youth work – the active participation of young people in society – has had limited results.

In the next few paragraphs, I will present the national process of professionalisation and recognition of youth work in Serbia, as the most advanced in the region.[93] This process started after the founding of NAPOR, with the intention of defining a quality assurance framework, including the identification of qualification levels, quality standards for youth work practitioners and for organisations, as well as internal and external "verification" or assessment mechanisms.

The first step in this process was specifying within the national context what youth work is. The founding assembly of NAPOR adopted the Guidelines for Quality Assurance of Youth Work Programmes (2009), within which it was stated that:

> The purpose of youth work is to support young people in the process of reaching independence, where youth workers help them in personal and social development in order to become active members of society and participants in decision-making processes. The idea of youth work is to create a safe environment and opportunities for active participation of young people on a voluntary basis in the process of acquiring skills, knowledge and attitudes. Therefore, youth work is:
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> a. complementary to formal education;
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> b. carried out by youth workers;
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> c. conducted through activities using methods of non-formal education and information.
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> (NAPOR 2011: 8)

Besides these guidelines, NAPOR has achieved several other important steps in the process of recognition and promotion of youth work and youth workers as a profession by developing:

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93. It has to be taken into account that some steps in defining occupational standards for youth workers were also finalised in Montenegro, as presented in "Omladinski rad u Crnoj Gori" [Youth work in Montenegro], published by Forum Syd in 2007.

- ▶ standards of qualifications in youth work on three levels:
  - – assistant for youth work programmes;
  - – co-ordinator for youth work programmes;
  - – specialist for youth work programmes;
- ▶ a mechanism for the validation of previously acquired competences from previously mentioned occupations;
- ▶ standards for youth work programmes;
- ▶ curricula for non-formal education for the youth work profession;
- ▶ a code of ethics for youth workers, adopted and signed by all NAPOR members;
- ▶ the Council for Ethics and the Ethical Code of Youth Work.

Besides a strong, advocacy-oriented association of youth practitioners, other steps have also been taken to establish the occupation of youth work in Serbia. The Centre for Youth Work (Centar za Omladinski Rad – CZOR), a founding member of NAPOR, is the only CSO in South-East Europe that provides formal university education for community youth workers. Its success is mirrored in the establishment of the two curricula within formal education, supported through the EU's Tempus programme. The Bachelor's and Master's Youth Work in Community programmes are implemented in co-operation with Jönköping University (Sweden) and two universities in Serbia (Alfa University and the University of Novi Sad).

Beyond Serbia, there is an accredited programme titled Leadership and Community Youth Work at the South East European University in Tetovo, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia". A similar initiative was begun in Montenegro with a feasibility analysis for a Master's on youth work in the community, but the programme did not come to fruition.

Perspectives on the sustainability of youth work

Bužinkić et al. (2015: 43) claim that youth work in Croatia, and I would argue throughout the whole region of South-East Europe as well, has become project and funding-oriented in the past few years:

> The "getting old" phenomenon of the youth sector is in place – individuals, initiatives, and organisations who have been most active in building the youth sector in Croatia from the early 1990s are disappearing from the youth scene. Those who have built the youth sector are no longer represented. In the meantime, new generations of youth (projects) consumers, instead of youth leaders, have filled the void.

Şenyuva (2012) is pointing to a similar trend in stating that the availability of foreign funds as the primary source of financing has had some unintended negative outcomes, like a lack of networking and co-operation in the youth field due to high competition for (very) limited funds, and one-off activities, with organisations failing to survive beyond funding periods (2012: 9).

Therefore, the results of the survey among youth workers in Serbia conducted by NAPOR in 2010 cannot come as a surprise. They show that the highest percentage of funding (52.83%) comes from the EU and other international institutions and

donors, followed by government institutions (ministries, cities, municipalities), at 44.45%. Despite the positive development in the share of national funds available for programmes of youth work, there remains a concern for the longer-term sustainability of these programmes.

This is especially important if we note that both international and national funding is strictly project based in the field of youth work, with projects generally limited to durations of 3 to 12 months, and exceptionally 18 to 24 months. In recent years, many donors have withdrawn from the South-East Europe region, with severe consequences for youth work.[94] In practice, the EU's Erasmus+ is the only major grant programme with a specific scheme for youth projects. In addition, economic weakness in the observed countries has led to further cutting down of already small budgets allocated for youth, endangering the progress already achieved and stalling the continuation of youth work development in South-East Europe.

Conclusion

Young people in South-East Europe are continuously faced with the difficulties of living in societies in prolonged economic transition, with increasingly unstable political systems. This leads to extended transitions to adulthood and high dependence on the family. In such circumstances, youth work is strongly challenged to provide paths to facilitate the transition from education to employment. Non-formal education programmes are mostly oriented towards gaining skills for better employability. Apart from general impressions and overviews, evidence on the existing processes and initiatives that could provide data for evaluation and monitoring is missing in all of the countries discussed.

We cannot claim that there is a unique concept of youth work in South-East Europe, in spite of the initiatives coming primarily from civil society. Youth work is undervalued throughout the region, with a few bright exceptions, and suffers from a lack of sustainable funding, but the sector still has great potential to develop into a coherent and powerful force in society. Its base will definitely remain within civil society, but hopefully this will not undermine the importance of the state support necessary to keep up with the needs of young people, whose benefit is at the core of the concept of youth work.

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94. There are some indications that the continuation of the refugee crisis in 2015 is bringing back the focus on the Balkans, but these actions are very specific and cannot by any means engage the whole youth work field, although there are many youth organisations involved in refugee relief actions.

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Chapter 13

Youth work in Spain – Approaches and main issues

Rafael Merino Pareja

Introduction: the Spanish context

A review of theories and concepts about youth work in Spain involves an initial linguistic and, at the same time, conceptual difficulty, as there is no Spanish translation of the term "youth work" and no tradition of theoretical debate on the question. What do exist are realities resembling youth work as it is defined in other countries. Some of these realities have a long history,[95] but are founded on different conceptual parameters, some more or less closely related to the baggage associated with youth work, as we will see in the course of this chapter. It is also true, however, that diversity and variety of concepts and practices are features of youth work in the European context (Williamson 2015).

Bearing in mind this variety in the European context, in this chapter we will analyse the three areas of work with young people that have developed in Spain that might be regarded as falling within the ambit of "youth work". First, we will look at youth movements, namely associations and other forms of collective action run by or for young people (in the latter case, run by adults with young people in mind). Second, we will look at youth policies in Spain, that is the theoretical and practical approaches underlying the activities and programmes offered by the authorities under the label of "youth". Third, we will look at public policies and voluntary initiatives aimed at marginalised, vulnerable and at-risk young people.

Although we have separated these three areas for the purposes of our analysis and because they spring from different traditions, there are many connections that exist and can be established among them. For example, from a biographical perspective, a young person who is a member of a Scout organisation may, over time, develop an interest in participating and join the local youth council. With the experience she gains, she may apply for the post of youth development officer at the local town hall. In that job, she may, among other things, devote her energies to a programme for

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95. A brief summary of this history is about to be published by the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership (Merino et al. 2015).

the prevention of drug use in one of the most deprived neighbourhoods of town. All these different stages may be regarded as falling within the ambit of youth work. In the field of training, too, there are many connections. In Spain, there is no specific training provision for youth workers and no qualification is required to work with young people. There is a university degree in social education and some universities offer specific Master's degrees in youth.[96] On these courses we find young people with the profiles described above. We will look more closely at the limitations and potentialities of these connections in the concluding section.

Before concluding this introductory section, it needs to be pointed out that Spain is a country of very marked internal diversity in terms of the economy, demographics and culture. It therefore needs to be remembered that when we speak of the Spanish "average", there may be very high degrees of "deviation".[97] Furthermore, since the democratic transition of the late 1970s and early 1980s, a marked process of political and administrative decentralisation has taken place, with the establishment of "autonomous communities" that have been taking over increasing responsibility for social policies, including youth policies.[98] Among other things, this has made it more difficult to obtain an overview of what is happening in each autonomous community, what the shared trends are and what is specific to each. Although there are co-ordinating bodies, such as the Youth Institute (Instituto de la Juventud – INJUVE) and the Youth Council of Spain (El Consejo de la Juventud de España – CJE), there are many initiatives that can be described as youth work that remain outside of institutional settings. It should be added that, given the scarcity of debate and research on youth work in Spain, the ideas put forward in this chapter are the subject of discussion and even speculation in what is a very open field of research.

Youth movements: the issue of recognition

In Spain, as in the other countries of southern Europe, civil society was for a long time weak, and youth movements and associations in particular were few in number and had little social and political influence. Catalonia and the Basque Country were

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96. By way of a biographical note, from 2009 to 2015 I was co-ordinator of social education studies at the Autonomous University of Barcelona and I have been involved since 2008 in the inter-university Master's degree in Youth and Society awarded by six Catalan universities.

97. To give just a few examples, there are highly industrialised, and generally wealthier, regions such as Madrid, Catalonia or the Basque Country. There are also regions that are very rich but whose revenue is derived almost exclusively from tourism, such as the Balearic Islands. There are regions with their own language, distinct from Castilian Spanish, such as Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia. And there are regions that have traditionally been poorer, more rural and exporters of population, such as Andalusia, Extremadura and Galicia. All this diversity has educational, social and political consequences, as we will see in the course of this chapter.

98. For the international reader, the autonomous communities would be regional governments, with more legislative and budgetary power than the French regions, but with less political autonomy than the German *Länder*. In the current political climate in Spain, however, there is a great deal of debate about the recentralisation of political decisions, with the communities acting more as managers of policies decided by central government. The tensions related to independentist aspirations in Catalonia and the Basque Country are not without relevance to this debate between centralisation and the further development of a federal model.

notable exceptions: here, the economic vitality of the middle classes and the emergence of nationalist movements pursuing linguistic and cultural and/or political goals led to the development of a more substantial civil society over the course of the 20th century. Many youth movements in these regions are rooted in wider nationalist movements.

While in general, social movements and associations were, and still are, weak, this is even truer of "autonomous" youth movements and associations, namely those set up by and for young people. We need only take a look at the list of member organisations of the Youth Council of Spain[99] to see that a good many of them are the youth branches of political parties, trade unions and large third sector organisations.

There is a type of youth movement that is particularly interesting for the youth work field, namely that which focuses on providing free-time education for children and adolescents. Although most were set up by adult-run institutions, essentially religious orders, but also, to a lesser extent, non-religious institutions (Red Cross, neighbourhood associations, etc.), the fact that they are concerned with the education of young people has made it necessary to establish a framework for this, with the production of teaching materials, the setting up of schools for facilitators and monitors, and a trend towards greater professionalisation in recent years, as we will see later on.

Free-time education was, and still is, one of the main focuses of work with adolescents and young people in the context of associations. In contrast to traditional school education based on the compartmentalisation of knowledge, learning by rote, streaming of pupils and the teacher's authoritarian role, the early years of the 20th century saw the emergence of movements for educational reform whose proposals were based on the integration of knowledge, learning by trial and error, personalised attention and the teacher's role as guide or companion.[100] In view of the school system's reluctance to take on board and institutionalise the new ideas, free-time education adopted many of these proposals, summer camps being one example. Thinkers from the French-speaking world were particularly influential: the ideas of educationalists and psychologists like Freinet, Piaget and Decroly were gradually added to the theoretical and practical baggage. Ideas and practices developed by the proponents of community development (also French-speaking) were subsequently incorporated. Free-time education thus evolved into what began to be defined, theoretically, in the 1980s as non-formal education, as opposed to formal school education, incorporating and developing such concepts as leadership, play, participation, creativity, group dynamics and everyday life. But this contrast was to some extent called into question when schools began to adopt activities that had been developed in free-time education bodies, such as summer camps or artistic expression, and to incorporate into the official curriculum a more comprehensive, outward-looking perspective that emphasised education for citizenship. For this reason, the distinction between formal, non-formal and informal education is no longer as meaningful as it was a few decades ago. This important question will be taken up again in the conclusions.

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99. See www.cje.org/en, accessed 11 March 2017.
100. To be precise, the first body of this type, Institución Libre de Enseñanza, was set up in Madrid in 1876. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Instituci%C3%B3n_Libre_de_Ense%C3%B1anza, accessed 11 March 2017.

Another very significant influence on free-time education, this time from the English-speaking world, was the legacy of Baden-Powell and his Scout movement. The influence was especially great in Catalonia, where it fitted in very well with the Catholic and patriotic organisations operating under the nationalist banner of resistance to the Franco dictatorship. Some of the most important contributions that the Scouting methodology made to the general philosophy of free-time education were activities in the open air, group dynamics and community service, or, in more modern terms, voluntary work.

One extremely important aspect of these youth movements is that the vast majority of educators are young people, aged 18 to 25, performing voluntary educational work with children and adolescents. Over the last few years, there has been a debate about issues affecting these movements and, by extension, other youth movements and youth work.

The first issue, to which others are linked, is that of recognition. This refers, on the one hand, to activities based on voluntary initiatives that are independent of the authorities and are often poorly funded, adopt a play-oriented approach and sometimes resist institutionalisation. On the other hand, the youth movements sought recognition of the contribution made by associations to the social integration of young people, local and regional development, the prevention of delinquency and, ultimately, the consolidation of democracy. There are therefore two aspects to the issue of recognition, one symbolic and the other more material. The symbolic aspect has to do with society's acceptance of the active, cohesion-generating role of youth associations, for example through statements in public documents and honourable mentions or prizes awarded by prestigious institutions at local, regional or national level. The material aspect has to do with incentives or with the requirements for carrying out the activity in question. In this connection, initial recognition came with training: starting in the 1980s, the autonomous communities introduced rules governing the minimum training for working as an educator in free-time education organisations and the minimum requirements to be met by the schools providing this training.

A second form of recognition came with specific legislation on the activities of associations, which includes the law setting up the Youth Council of Spain. Similar laws were also passed in some autonomous communities. The third form of recognition is financial, with the allocation of public funds in the form of subsidies to associations' activities, although this funding has decreased considerably in the last few years.

Lastly, one topic that gives rise to controversy and doubts within youth movements is that of professionalisation. On the one hand, there is a degree of consensus concerning the added value involved in voluntary work as an expression of altruism and as a school for citizenship.[101] On the other hand, some studies point to the fact that the experience gained in youth organisations is a bridge leading to the employment market (Vidal 2005). Indeed, some organisations have moved from arrangements based on voluntary work to the employment of paid workers, which has forced

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101. Although the motives for doing voluntary work are not always altruistic, its positive connotations have led the Catalonian educational authorities to consider introducing a "voluntary work" course in secondary schools, which is a contradiction to say the least.

them to build capacity for management, fundraising and evaluation and reporting to public and private funding agents.

Youth policies: two competing visions

In Spain, "youth policies" refer essentially to the programmes and activities of the youth departments of public administrations, from central government to the regional and local authorities, with the latter playing a major role. There are two levels of youth policy. The first is strictly political, in the sense of the policy makers who discuss priorities based on ideological considerations and who draw up and approve budgets for implementation by the youth departments. The second level is technical: the workers who roll out, implement and evaluate the youth programmes. These workers might be equated with the youth workers of other countries. In fact, there are associations of these workers, such as the one that exists in Catalonia, which organised the event Be Youth Worker Today[102] in Barcelona at the end of November 2015. But this category covers a huge range of job profiles, functions and tasks, including technicians, counsellors, information officers, facility managers and facilitators, as well as contractual arrangements, including civil servants, freelance workers, staff on a work contract or contract of service, and staff subcontracted by companies, co-operatives or associations.

The crisis of the last few years and public spending cuts have had very negative effects on youth policies, investment in facilities, staff expenditure and subsidies (Soler, Planas and Feixa 2014), with the result that youth policies and a recognition of the need for them have been placed firmly on the agenda (Comas 2011). In addition, with the aim of reducing public spending, the Spanish Government has enacted new legislation on local government that reduces the powers and financial capacity of municipalities. It should be borne in mind that many municipalities have set up youth programmes and facilities (information centres, youth centres, cultural centres, counselling services, etc.) without the capacity to sustain them and with scant resources of their own, which have been greatly reduced.

Quite apart from budgetary restrictions, since youth policies began to be implemented in the 1980s there has been a succession of theoretical debates on the role and direction of these policies – what they are and what they should be. The tenor of these debates is obviously influenced by the stakeholders' interests and the material possibilities of implementation. For example, in the 1990s the need for youth departments was called into question as their existence could be interpreted as a sign of the marginalisation and segregation of young people from the rest of the population. For the proponents of this view, what needed to be done was to exert an influence on other administrative departments (town planning, social services, education, employment, etc.) through integrated plans furthering young people's interests, but within those general policies. But it was an overly ambitious goal and youth departments were retained as agencies in their own right or bodies associated with other "minor" activities such as festivals or citizen participation. In other words, youth policies were reduced to peripheral policies (Casal 2002), while the

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102. See www.beyouthworkertoday.net/en, accessed 12 March 2017.

core policies, that is those most directly affecting young people's lives, were located in other departments (especially education and employment).

It is partly for this reason that there has been a tension in youth policies between what we might call policies of transition or emancipation and policies of participation (Garcia and Merino 2006). Policies of transition are those that seek to promote the emancipation of young people – those that help to strengthen educational pathways and improve access to employment and housing. Policies of participation focus essentially on promotion of the activities of associations and cultural consumption. There have been, and still are, attempts to link the two through youth programmes and action plans cutting across other departments. Successful implementation is, however, hindered by institutional inertia, professional cultures and a shortage of resources. The tension between these two policy directions is closely related to the debate on the role of youth workers: on whether their mission is to help young people to no longer be young people, namely to make the transition to the adult world, or whether, on the contrary, it is to ensure that young people live their youth as fully as possible. In the current context of high youth unemployment and early school leaving, there is increasing pressure to pursue the first vision. On the other hand, young people from the middle classes have more access to services geared to the "fullness" of youth, such as youth tourism, international exchanges or art competitions for young people. We will return to this matter in the conclusion.

Lastly, we turn to a more ideological aspect. Youth policy is often discussed from a technocratic perspective, but there are at least two possible visions – we will simplify the innumerable possible variations thus for reasons of space – which correspond to different paradigms and different visions of society. The first focuses on the need for young people to become integrated into society and to take on adult roles. Action to prevent social deviancy (e.g. delinquency, substance abuse, at-risk behaviours) is one of the priorities. The second vision is concerned with the social change that young people can bring to an adult society remote from the interests and needs of young people. The promotion of youth sub-cultures, artistic creation, social innovation and youth self-management stand out as priorities. Clearly, the profile and functions of youth workers will vary depending on whether the mandate assigned to them is closer to one or the other of the two visions of youth policy.

Young people at risk: empower or protect?

Although in the European context a distinction can be drawn between youth workers and social workers, there are some common aspects that warrant consideration. The history of social work in Spain differs from that of many other European countries. It began with youth educators who worked in areas of high urban and social deprivation. Due to French influence, they were known initially as "specialised educators". Later, with the creation of university studies, they came to be known as social educators. They were also known as street educators, with religious and/or political influences, during the final years of the Franco regime and the early years of democracy. Together with educators working in institutions for the care of homeless children, they gradually created a community of practice and forged a sense of professional unity that resulted in the setting up of professional associations of social educators starting in

the late 1990s, with a presence in nearly all the autonomous communities.[103] With the creation of university studies (three-year diploma courses in 1992, four-year degree courses from 2009 onwards), the community of practice linked up with the academic community, especially the social and community education field, but also other related fields, such as sociology, anthropology and psychology. But the focus of university studies and professional associations was gradually widened to include other policy areas, such as adult education, community development, children in care and active ageing. Nevertheless, the degree courses in social education are among the main training platforms for social educators and youth workers.[104]

From an educational perspective, the concept of "empowerment" has come strongly to the fore to replace the paradigm of intervention (Agudo and Albornà 2011), although it is criticised for being disconnected from social action on account of its individualising tendencies (Richez et al. 2012). In fact, what is involved here is the old educational dilemma between control and transformation: (social) education as an instrument of institutional control or for social change. Or, seen from another perspective, (social) education as an instrument of prevention with a long-term vision or as a remedial instrument in the face of situations of anomie, conflict or social maladjustment. The balance between these dilemmas or tensions determines the position of what is still one of the major challenges of social education and youth work: the bond that needs to be created between the educator and the young person in order to aid and facilitate young people's educational processes.

As far as the creation of this bond is concerned, in the last few years there has been discussion about a new approach to the education of adolescents and young people in an open environment. We are no longer in the 1970s, when street educators acted as militant lay priests. Nor is it a question of bureaucratising human relations with protocols, offices and files, producing the kind of inertia that has been seen increasingly in the social services. Opening up spaces and bringing educators closer to where young people are, whether in public spaces, schools, sports clubs or virtual spaces, will be one of the keys to youth work, whether it is carried out by social services, by youth departments or by any public or social agency wishing to go beyond the concept of "youth service user".[105]

Conclusion

To conclude, I would like to recapitulate some of the most important ideas that have emerged in the course of this chapter. First of all, the diversity of youth work is, and can be, an asset, but it also seems necessary to improve co-ordination and connections among the different stakeholders and institutions and to gradually overcome

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103. Decentralisation also affects the recognition of professional associations, responsibility for which lies with the autonomous communities.
104. To a limited extent, there are also postgraduate studies specialising in youth, but they have little impact, partly because they are not a requirement for entering the profession.
105. This is the objective of a network of educators that for four years has been organising conferences on support for adolescents and young people in an open environment, in co-operation with the Autonomous University of Barcelona. See https://jornadaacompanyament.wordpress.com, accessed 13 March 2017.

traditions that may be causing inertia. It must not be forgotten that the goal is the integration/emancipation of young people, and that is something in which we are all involved. It was for this reason that I remarked earlier that the distinction between formal, non-formal and informal education seems obsolete and that we need to break down the barriers. In Spain, we have experience of youth workers working in secondary schools, and schools that open their doors and become spaces open to the community. Painting things in black and white – attributing all ills or failings to school and all manner of virtues to youth work as a panacea – serves no purpose. In the absence of systematic evaluations, a major shortcoming of the sector, we cannot say that all the effects of youth work are positive.[106] There is a need to be more self-critical and self-demanding. Participation is one example. In our field, it is taken for granted that youth participation is a good thing. But we do not always have the conditions to ensure that this participation has real effects, and this can therefore lead to frustration (Merino and Seckinger 2007).

There is and will continue to be tension between youth work as a means to an end and youth work as a medium of expression. Its use as a means to an end is fairly inevitable in a context of high youth unemployment. Here, the key issue is that getting a job should be more a consequence than an objective of youth work. But we must also avoid defending youth work from a purely sectoral standpoint, as it is very difficult to close up a field that, by definition, is open, complex and interconnected.

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106. In the cited publication by Williamson (2015), reference is made to an article by Feinstein based on the longitudinal British Birth Cohort Study in which it was found that young people who had been to a youth club at 16 years of age were faring less well at the age of 26 (Feinstein et al. 2006). In Spain, there have been cases of youth clubs that had to close because they were meeting places for conflicted young people.

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Chapter 14

Influential theories and concepts in UK youth work – What's going on in England?

Pauline Grace and Tony Taylor

"I fear for youth work. Things I believe in – process, building relationships, questioning conversations – don't seem valued. Everything feels decided in advance, short-term and on management's terms. I feel I'm selling young men and women short." (Youth Worker, In Defence of Youth Work conference, Leeds, 2015)

"Working to prescribed outcomes is the way forward. It brings discipline and a sense of purpose. We can sell what we're doing and survive. It's in our interests and young people's." (Youth Work Manager, In Defence of Youth Work conference, Leeds, 2015)

In seeking to explore the impact of theory on youth work in England we face a twofold dilemma. The first is one of ideology, the second one of the correspondence between theory and practice. As for the former, in any historical period we have had to address what its dominant ideas are. The ideology most suited to the perceived needs of the ruling elite achieves what Gramsci termed hegemony. It becomes the oft-undisputed common sense of the age. As for the latter, theory and practice exist in an uncomfortable marriage, often divorced from one another, often pursuing new partners in the quest to consummate the relationship.

Usually, these dilemmas are ignored by both youth workers and youth agencies. The continuing tradition within English youth work is pragmatism. Notwithstanding token references to reflective practice, the emphasis is more often on "doing" rather than "thinking". Despite the efforts of the training institutions, youth work can come across as anti-theoretical and anti-intellectual. In defending their practice youth workers are likely to invoke their commitment to a notion of discrete youth work values and skills, known only to the anointed. Rarely will they describe their practice as being informed by specific theoretical understandings or identify themselves as

the conscious disciples of a particular ideological viewpoint, apart from, for example, openly feminist or faith-based practitioners.

In stressing this we do not intend to be scornful of the field's suspicion of theory or its apparent ignorance of ideology. Much social theory is itself problematic. It can be no more than an explanatory template that is imposed on reality, come what may, undermining serious thinking about the complexity of practice. Given that theory is often either inadequate or only half-understood it is not surprising that workers put it to one side. This rejection is caught in the familiar refrain, "Me, I just use my common sense."

This brings us inexorably to ideology. For the retreat of the worker into common sense is riddled with problems. Even as they dismiss theory their outlook is informed by unspoken theory, by taken-for-granted ideas about how and why individuals act, and about how societies function. In today's world the dominant body of ideas goes by the name of neo-liberalism, although reference to its significance is absent from most writing about work with young people. For now, we will offer a shorthand definition of neo-liberalism, summed up in a single word: privatisation. For over three decades, neo-liberalism has sought to privatise the public, to undermine a collective sense of the common good, alongside desiring to privatise the individual, to turn us into possessive and self-centred consumers.

That said, no ideology is ever, despite the popularity of the adverb, "absolutely" powerful. The remnants of past ideologies are necessary to its success, yet remain dangerous. These supposed leftovers can revive and renew from within. Even if it is almost a truism nowadays, youth work remains a contested ideological and theoretical space. With this claim in mind we will endeavour to unravel the tangle of theories and concepts prevalent in contemporary English youth work, some of which threaten to strangle it to death. In our quest to save youth work from the neo-liberal gallows we will explore both the continuities and discontinuities in the evidence we uncover.

Visiting the past to understand the present

To make sense of the dramatic ideological and theoretical shift experienced in England we need to look briefly to the past. Following the Second World War, a social-democratic consensus prevailed, favouring a benevolent, interventionist state concerned with the welfare and education of its citizens. Within youth work, this perspective was codified by the Albemarle Report (1960), which brought into existence a professional youth service via a national training course, underpinned by a significant youth centre building programme. This development itself marked a break from a century of youth work almost untouched by the state.

Among the key concepts in post-Albemarle youth work were:

▶ a belief in a distinctive, improvisatory, process-led informal educational practice, the rhythm of which was determined ultimately by young people;

▶ an emphasis on association and relationship, drawing on Albemarle's edict that nurturing "young people to come together into groups of their own

choosing is the fundamental task of the Service" (Ministry of Education 1960: 52);

▶ a stress on the personality and integrity of the worker – the first adult not to be an authority figure;

▶ while continuing the pre-Second World War concern with the character of the young person, a move away from inculcating social conformity to facilitating self-awareness;

▶ a ringing endorsement of the centrality of young people's voluntary participation "because it introduces adult freedom and choice" (Ministry of Education 1960: 10).

Following both the Milson-Fairbairn Report (1969) and the entry into work of activists from the social movements of the time these concepts were politicised, leading to:

▶ a recognition that young people were heterogeneous, social individuals, their age being qualified by the interaction of their class, gender, race, sexuality, disability and faith;

▶ an increased focus on participation and collective political engagement (Davies and Taylor 2013).

In the first phase of this period, theoretical underpinnings were provided in particular by leading figures from the world of humanistic psychology, such as Carl Rogers (1961), Abraham Maslow (1943) and Erving Goffman (1959). Group work and counselling were fertile ground for a non-judgmental practice, which began with young people's agendas. As politics and pedagogy entered the arena, thinkers such as Paulo Freire (1993) and Saul Alinsky (1971) came to the fore, succeeded by the growing influence of theories interrogating such fundamental issues as gender, race and sexuality. Gradually this progressive mix of ideas was brought together within the training agencies as a package, sometimes dubbed "anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory practice".

Before moving on, though, it is vital to record that this radicalised social-democratic ideology, reflected in practice, for example, through the flowering of autonomous work with young women, with Black and Asian youth, together with gay and lesbian young people, was never the only game in town. It was resisted on the ground or indeed never took hold, especially among traditional voluntary youth organisations. By the end of the 1990s, as neo-liberalism became ever more influential, a radicalised practice was on the wane.

The ascendancy of neo-liberalism

Let us begin our exploration of neo-liberalism's impact on English youth work by comparing it to our sketch of the social-democratic consensus and specifically, the seven key concepts set out above. The neo-liberal consensus has brought about a malevolent and shrinking state, hostile to public services and intent on regulating the behaviour of individuals. Within youth work this has led to the collapse of the education-based youth service and the fragmentation of the workforce, while the independence of the voluntary youth sector has been undermined.

Among the key concepts in the neo-liberal armoury, according to Jeffs and Smith (2008), are the following:

- ▶ the imposition of prescribed outcomes on targeted groups via structured, time-limited initiatives;
- ▶ a deep distrust of young people's own peer groups;
- ▶ a stress on the worker as an entrepreneurial deliverer of agreed funding programmes;
- ▶ while continuing the classic concern with the character of the young person, a shift back to social conformity and behavioural modification;
- ▶ a loss of faith in the voluntary relationship informed by a view that young people make poor choices, so it is better that their options are predetermined;
- ▶ a return to a generalised notion of young people;
- ▶ a desire to limit participation to agreed formal channels, a wish to reduce social action to volunteering and a fear of direct political activity.

This list is not exhaustive and as we advance our argument other neo-liberal themes will emerge. However, we need to grapple with the question of what theories have contributed to this sea change in the philosophy of youth work in England.

So, will answers be found within the youth and community work training agencies? In the main, these institutions have held steadfastly to a curriculum inspired by the radicalisation of social-democratic ideology through the 1970s and 1980s. Thinking has not stood still, but the focus remains firmly on informal learning, on conversation and dialogue, on identity groups and on power relations. A Rogerian person-centred approach has remained constant. However, being person-centred has not led to individualised learning dislocated and disconnected from the collective and the collaborative. Both critical theory (Foucault 1984) and the feminist and race critique explored by, for example, hooks (1984) have become influential in engaging with challenging and changing circumstances, abetted by a focus offered by the concept of intersectionality theory (Crenshaw 1989). The political construct of social justice, equality and shared values is interrogated to enable youth work students to be co-creators of their own critical pedagogy. The tradition continues with contemporary UK-based academics exploring and extending the understanding of youth work practice within a politically fraught and divisive context (Batsleer 2015; Sallah and Kennedy 2015).

In the institution in which one of this chapter's authors teaches, there is an increasing emphasis on the notion of open professional youth work as an antidote to the fixation on targeted, closed interventions into young people's lives. Open youth work seeks to be transformative, being based on "democratic education" rather than the hierarchical idea of top-down expertise. However, there is no "one-size-fits-all" model of youth work, as the many histories of youth work confirm (Verschelden et al. 2009; Coussée et al. 2010; Coussée, Williamson and Verschelden 2012; Taru, Coussée and Williamson 2014; Siurala et al. 2016). Tensions surface between the advocates of the continued development of professionalised youth work and proponents of voluntary youth work. Elaborating on Lorenz's (2009) theme of ambivalence in understanding the inherent contradictions present in defining the purpose and function of youth

work, Devlin argues that "the negotiation of ambivalence should itself be seen as a core skill ... of youth workers" (2012: 184). He argues that Lorenz's ambivalence theme can be applied to the ongoing debate between professionalism and professionalisation. Williamson contributes to the debate, suggesting:

> Whether it is called social education, informal education, positive youth development, personal and social development, non-formal education or something else, "youth work" is invariably positioned on the cusp of competing pressures and expectations – between the individual and society, between association and transition, and much more. (Williamson 2015: 4)

For advocates of youth work identified as a form of informal education, a process of critical pedagogy, Freire remains a profound influence. Thus youth workers are encouraged to be reflective practitioners, comfortable with asking questions of themselves, young people and organisations. Youth work is recognised as a political activity, existing within a community locus, often troubling and problematic. Communities are recognised as contested arenas, within which both youth workers and young people can be committed, critical activists.

However, in these troubled neo-liberal times, the praiseworthy adherence of the training agencies to an alternative perspective is fragile. Traditionally, the managerialists are suspicious. Demanding graduates who are work-ready, obedient functionaries, they criticise the agencies for being out of touch. Meanwhile, within much of practice itself the neo-liberal agenda has cornered the market via government and managerial diktat. Given the limitations of this chapter, we will focus on three concepts through which neo-liberal ideology and theory have insinuated themselves deeply into the fabric of youth work – outcomes, a "theory of change" and youth development. Part of the appeal of this package is that it sells itself as down-to-earth and practical, rather than airy-fairy and theoretical.

A framework of outcomes for young people

The fixation on outcomes is no accident. Outcomes-based management (OBM) is a neo-liberal product of the early 1990s, and it proved to be a key element in the strategy of marketising both the public and voluntary sectors and disciplining and conditioning its workforce. OBM on its own terms argues that outcomes must be measurable, attainable within a given time frame and traceable from start to end. It does not spring to mind as an approach suited to the fragile yet fertile world of process-led youth work practice.

The Catalyst consortium, led by the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS), supported by the National Youth Agency (NYA), the Social Enterprise Coalition and the Young Foundation (YF), harboured no such doubts. In 2012, it announced its support for a youth sector market, social finance and the need for a framework of measurement. This naive embrace of neo-liberal ideology is best caught in the infamous advice espoused by the NYA in its report "The future for outcomes" (2013). Before a young person is even "a twinkle in the eye" of the youth worker, a project is instructed to define its audience, agree on the evidence needed and, accordingly, select from its portfolio of outcomes. In this scenario prioritising the collection of

the right data is seen as crucial to competing in a world of commissioning and increasingly, payment by results. At a stroke the market is thrust into the very heart of our work, while young men and women are commodified and reduced to being no more than the bearers of "data for exchange".

The basis of the YF's Framework of Outcomes for Work with Young People (2012) is a matrix of social and emotional capabilities: communication, managing feelings, resilience and determination, creativity, relationships and leadership, planning and problem solving, and confidence and agency; this breaks no new ground, although the absence of any reference to sexuality is staggering, and any reference to collective political activity less so. The YF argues that these outcomes can be measured and compared via a range of recommended tests and questionnaires, such as the Grit Survey and the New Philanthropy Capital Well-Being Measure. The goal is to convince workers and managers of the scientific nature of the outcome-led enterprise, of how robust and rigorous it all is. However, the claim does not stand up to scrutiny. To take but one example, a young person becoming confident is no straightforward matter. Becoming so is always provisional and often situation-specific. As it waxes and wanes it cannot be claimed by any specific worker or agency. It cannot be understood outside of the totality of the young person's existence. By its very social nature an outcome is the product of multiple causalities. Given that the young person's life is complex, the outcome is inevitably simplified. A possible shift in confidence is assumed on the basis of answers to a rushed questionnaire at the end of a fleeting residential weekend. All is smoke and mirrors.

A theory of change

Overseeing the pursuit of outcomes and the collection of data is the notion of a theory of change. In a nutshell, this fashionable and influential construct argues that it is necessary at first to set a project's long-term goal, before working back to identify the outcomes necessary to the realisation of the goal. The YF makes plain its goal at the very outset. The product of the framework is to be the "emotionally resilient" young individual who, through the planned interventions of youth workers, will shrug their shoulders at adversity. Utterly in tune with neo-liberal policy, this manufactured individual will have less need for public services such as health and social welfare and will be willing to work for whatever wages, zero-hour contracts or indeed benefits that are on offer. The last thing such an individualised cipher would ask is, "How come this is happening to me, my mates, to thousands of others?" Nowhere in the YF's Framework of Outcomes is there an acknowledgement that to talk of personal change demands an engagement with the social and political circumstances underpinning young people's lives.

Youth development: youth work's successor?

The vehicle for this fundamental change in philosophy is "youth development". Noting its growing influence a decade ago, Jeffs and Smith (2008) illustrate its congruence with the increasing emphasis on "managing transitions" and the need to address through positive activities and predetermined programmes young people "at risk"

of falling behind. They suggest that the youth development approach favours formation (training) rather than education, being "less open-ended and more oriented to delivering a message" (2008: 288) or, in the light of our critique of outcomes, the delivery of an approved type of young person.

Little, though, has been written across this period from the point of view of those practising youth development. The model has been introduced, often without being named as such, by management and consultants, who have argued that it brings much-needed order to a practice perceived to be unruly and rudderless. This prejudice is echoed in the argument set out by Stuart and Maynard (2015) in an article that provides the first serious definition of its nature to appear. In essence they propose that rooted in non-formal learning and education, youth development is a structured and planned intervention into young people's lives with identified and intended measurable outcomes. It can be shown to be robust and rigorous in both theory and practice. While rooted in informal learning and education, youth work is no more than unintentional learning, having little need for an educator or for preparation. Given a failure to evidence achievement, youth work is less than robust and less than rigorous.

In a trio of responses Davies, Taylor and Thompson (2016) refute this assertion. They argue that Stuart and Maynard fail to recognise the central role played in youth work as informal education by the purposeful, improvisatory and reflective practitioner, who relates to individuals and groups at a rhythm and pace appropriate to both changing needs and shifting circumstances. This emphasis on a particular interpretation of informal learning (Batsleer 2008), which is facilitated rather than led, sits uneasily alongside a European tradition rooted in a non-formal perspective closer to that advocated by Stuart and Maynard. In addition, Davies, Taylor and Thompson underline that the areas of intervention pursued by youth development, namely employability, challenging anti-social behaviour, developing well-being and engagement in social action, are not the result of dialogue with young people. Rather, they are imposed categories linked to neo-liberal funding streams.

Thus the diversity of theories utilised by Stuart and Maynard (2015) continues youth work's (and now youth development's) eclectic borrowing from social psychology, that is its flirtation with passing fads and fancies. In this context youth development offers confidently seductive, but speculative models of behaviour to aid the worker's interventions, for example Honey and Mumford's (1982) crude proposal that we are but one of four sorts of learner – Activist, Theorist, Pragmatist or Reflector. As for dubious pseudo-scientific apologetics for the neo-liberal, self-centred individual one need look no further than the burgeoning use of Neuro-Linguistic Programming. It is an indication of the degeneration of practice that this development is rarely questioned.

Conclusion

Many of the most influential contemporary concepts and theories being brought to bear on youth work in England today are the antithesis of its dialogic tradition. They threaten the future of a distinctive, open-ended educational practice, which does not

presume to write a script in advance of the task of knowing a young person. They threaten "the voluntary principle [which] ensures that, in their dealings ... young people possess and retain a degree of power which is intrinsic to the practice ... the young person can just walk away, thereby leaving the adult powerless" (Davies 2005: 8).

Yet resistance to the neo-liberal assault continues and is perhaps growing. While leading voluntary youth organisations bend to the government's will, small not-for-profit initiatives, often led by redundant state-employed workers, are emerging. At least part of the faith youth work milieu is politicised and vocal (Pimlott 2015). Links are being made with child and young person-centred advocates within social work and youth justice, not least because a significant number of workers have been redeployed into these services from the almost-extinct local authority (municipality) education department, Youth Services. The campaign In Defence of Youth Work plays a leading part in keeping the debate alive, taking up the challenge to illustrate impact through its "Story-Telling" model of reflection and evaluation (2011).

Looking further afield, it is a priority to forge a positive and critical relationship with youth workers across Europe. At recent conferences it was plain that English youth work's retreat has seen it falling behind its European counterparts in terms of the critical evaluation of the character and purpose of its practice. In stating this we face some uncomfortable questions, not least interrogating critically the tension between what we might term informal youth work and non-formal youth work. Our contention clearly is that non-formal youth work has grown significantly in England because it is more easily influenced by neo-liberal ways of thinking than unpredictable informal youth work. Where does this fit with the experience of workers in the rest of Europe, including, ironically, those in Scotland, Wales and Ireland? In preparing delegates for the 2nd European Youth Work Convention Williamson advocated, "Now is the time … [for] all actors in the youth field who are committed to strengthening the place and purpose of youth work to build on and develop the opportunities created" (2015: 44). Our hope lies in the unifying potential of the Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention (2015), which reminds us that "Youth work engages with young people on their terms and on their turf, in response to their expressed and identified needs, in their own space or in spaces created for youth work practice".

Within what must be a continuing and critical dialogue we concur with Coburn and Gormally (2015) that youth workers need to confront the present neo-liberal hegemony's desire for social conformity through a renewed emancipatory praxis committed to social change. In this struggle we believe the tradition of informal youth work remains vital and vibrant, not least because it expresses resistance and eludes control.

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Section II

Key challenges
of youth work today

Chapter 15

Key challenges of youth work today – An introduction

Nuala Connolly

Section II addresses the key challenges for youth work today. The challenges faced by youth work are both enduring and shifting, requiring youth workers to adapt to changing circumstances while remaining true to the core principles of youth work. The Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention emphasises that while youth work has political and financial support in some countries, it has fallen victim to austerity measures and indifference in others. Youth work faces the challenges of funding, recognition and credibility, as well as a changing socio-political and economic landscape. Addressing the challenges in their multiplicity in the context of the social situation of young people in Europe captures their richness, texture, nuances, and both subtle and clear differences, all of which continue to have enduring implications for policy and practice.

This section examines the challenges of youth work, exploring its underlying concepts and theories, definitions, patterns, practices and outcomes, along with the potential for common ground. Possibilities for quality standards, education and training are also explored. The question of how political and public authorities can be persuaded to support the delivery of youth work is also addressed. Alongside these longstanding issues on the purpose and outcomes of youth work, a number of topical challenges are tackled in more detail in this section. The role of youth work in relation to migration and young people from migrant backgrounds is considered. The issue of youth radicalisation in the context of youth work is examined. Furthermore, the role of youth work in responding to new media is also discussed. Inevitably, issues are cross-cutting and discussions have common characteristics and intersect. This reflects both the diversity of youth work and the common ground as well as gaps identified in the 2nd European Youth Work Declaration. In bringing together this extensive collection of contributions, Section II provides a stimulating tapestry of thinking on the vibrant fabric of youth work.

Opening the section, Williamson searches for common ground in the diversity of youth work, exploring the theory and practice of youth work and its evolution over time across Europe. He presents a number of questions that go on to frame the chapters in this section, establishing whether there are reasonably consensual ideas about youth work practice. Williamson identifies a need to consider the meaning and "raison d'être" of youth work, in addition to the aims and anticipated outcomes

of youth work. He also explains the challenge of setting up a range of activities that may count as youth work, and the boundaries of this work. The question of what kinds of training should be established to ensure quality and standards is also explored. The issue of how youth work can secure recognition beyond the field is recognised, and the author considers how political and public authorities might be persuaded of the value of youth work. Such questions are crucial in seizing this moment, when the European institutions are concerned with "youth policy" and the place of "youth work" within it.

In Chapter 17, Redig tackles a principal issue identified by Williamson: the challenges in finding an internationally agreed definition of youth work. He argues that while a broad description allows international reflection, there exists little consensus on the identification of youth work. He also identifies some unanimously agreed characteristics of youth work. These include the situation of youth work in the "third" or leisure environment, and the emphasis on autonomy in this space. In addition, youth work should reach, in principle, all young people. Redig defines the informal and non-formal learning space, and the contribution of youth work to a range of competences. He also cites literature where youth work practices are linked to emancipation, empowerment and the objective of active participation. In this way, youth work recognises young people as autonomous. But strong uncertainties also prevail, including the definition of the age range covering youth, the professionalisation of youth work, the policy scope of youth work and differing ideological perspectives. Redig presents four perspectives – young people, youth work, authorities, science – that play a role in the debate, reflecting different starting points. He uses these stakeholder groups to begin a debate on the aspects of consensus and dissent.

In Chapter 18, Siurala explores the meanings, concepts and theories of youth work, identifying the organisation, the youth worker and young people as the key actors in this debate. He notes that the literature focuses on the second angle in defining the meaning of youth work; youth workers are constructing definitions based on the key elements of the relationship between the youth worker and young people. The chapter goes on to discuss youth work through its history, through present theories and practices and also through the demands of the future. Siurala claims that the key actors do not communicate very well, and identifies ways in which better communication could be achieved. He argues that a lack of a theoretical foundation has resulted in a messiness that has allowed hidden assumptions, political legitimation and populism to take over the definition of youth work. In addition, two apparently opposing interests of emancipation and control have constructed the idea of youth work over time. Youth work has historically been more about social integration than about youth changing society, and as a result has become instrumentalised, pedagogisised and formalised. Siurala contends that definitions of youth work have to choose between two dangers: eclectic openness and concrete inflexibility. The author looks to the future, reasoning that cross-sectoral co-operation, as identified in the 2nd European Youth Work Convention, is one of the key areas where youth work must take action.

In Chapter 19, Cuzzocrea explores the aims and anticipated outcomes of youth work at a national, European and transnational level, considering commonalities and differences. The author presents this in two respects. Firstly, she considers

what unites young people who are engaged with youth work; how youth work can desegregate those young people who are more at risk of segregation because they have escaped from conditions of poor integration; and whether youth work is capable of reaching and opening up communities that would otherwise remain separated, possibly towards integration. This is discussed in the context of young migrants, middle-class youth, vulnerable groups and sexual minorities. Secondly, Cuzzocrea tackles the question of how the work of different actors can combine to fulfil the aims associated with youth work. She uses the work of Coussée to draw together features of youth work practice, including use of the methods of non-formal education, voluntary participation, listening to the voice of young people, bringing young people together, and connecting to and broadening young people's lifeworlds. The author concludes that there is opportunity for further development to explore if other communities can be added to the list of target groups; if any of the points identified can be reformulated; what risks are entailed in such broad collaborations; and how these may affect the proposed aims of youth work.

Kovacic explores the patterns and practices constituting youth work in Chapter 20, including the core aspects of youth work, existing typologies and their limitations, and the importance of contexts in defining youth work. He discusses the essence of youth work: empowering young people to participate actively in society; equipping young people with skills; through activities that are appropriate for young people. Among other principles, youth work is described as flexible, interdisciplinary and multi-sectoral. Typologies for youth work are outlined, including the Irish, British and Australian traditions. This thinking is then expanded with 10 differing European definitions of youth work that draw on national traditions, illustrating the challenge in reaching a consensus on the definition of youth work. The core of the argument presented by Kovacic is that youth work is multi-method, multi-perspective and interdisciplinary, uses a variety of approaches from all relevant disciplines, and aims at positive youth development. The author makes the argument that youth work should focus on outcomes for young people, and less on the nature of specific activities. Realising this would depend on increased resources for policy mapping and improved data on examples of best, good and not-so-good practice. Kovacic argues that the responsibility of those working in the area of youth work is to promote its eclecticism and uniqueness of approach as an advantage.

In Chapter 21, Schild and Williamson examine the connections between youth work and wider work with young people. Wider work with young people refers to activities and practices in youth policy domains that have a relationship to and impact on young people's lives. The authors question how connections can be achieved, while ensuring appropriate boundaries are maintained. This leads to a discussion about the risk of instrumentalisation of youth work for other purposes. The authors explore the current priorities of European youth policies including Agenda 2020 and the EU Youth Strategy, arguing that youth work can be a small cog with wider policy domains playing a more prominent role. They also describe how youth work and other policy domains working with young people often face similar, if not identical, challenges and problems. For some, guiding principles revolve around the four Ps of prevention, protection, promotion and participation. Participation is distinct, with the authors contending that the extent to which young people have a say differs

in other sectors. The authors argue that there are examples of successful collaboration with other sectors working with young people and youth work, highlighting the potential for mutual learning and mutual respect. They argue that youth work should work, though not uncritically, with other sectors, with initiatives for bridge building coming from both sides.

In Chapter 22, Şenyuva and Kiilakoski explore the challenges in the recognition of youth work beyond the youth field. The authors make a case for the validation and recognition of learning in youth work. In addition, they argue that youth work should be seen as an agent that has the legitimacy to validate learning. Emphasising that some non-formal learning environments have come to be seen as legitimate learning environments and as part of the European agenda, Şenyuva and Kiilakoski point out that validation as a process is typically more formal, requiring pre-set standards of learning and an agent capable of applying these standards. The working paper "Pathways 2.0 towards recognition of non-formal learning/education and of youth work in Europe" (Council of Europe/European Commission 2011) is highlighted as particularly important in framing the different forms of recognition. The authors also describe the Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio[107] as an important tool for tracking competence development through youth work. In addition, lifelong learning as a policy imperative is explored in the context of youth work. The chapter presents an argument for recognition within the education field, the employment field and also in processes of social integration. The case of refugees is presented as an illustrative example. Connected to this is a discussion of how recognition can be communicated to outsiders. In summary, Şenyuva and Kiilakoski argue that the recognition of youth work depends on two goals. Youth work should be seen as a legitimate profession capable of producing learning outcomes. It should also offer a framework for recognising learning compatible with its ethos. This is challenging, and results in a dual perspective requiring one to both explicate the nature of learning while avoiding the risk of losing the informal process.

Petkovic and Zentner provide food for thought on education and training systems in Chapter 23, exploring pathways into youth work and related quality standards in the context of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention. The chapter focuses on the challenges resulting from the lack of a clear framework for the professional development of youth workers, emphasising the need to clarify, on the one hand, specific tasks and outcomes, and on the other, encourage dialogue with other professions. The authors describe the structures of education and training of youth workers in Europe, identifying convergence and commonality across a number of elements including the degree of specialisation, theory and practice, standardisation and recognition, and professionalisation. The chapter also explores the dilemma of the policy shift towards the professionalisation of youth work, in order to meet multiple challenges to produce successful outcomes. The authors argue that irrespective of the differing structures, some standards should be reflected in all youth work education and training. A number of policy developments are outlined, including the 14 criteria developed by the Council of Europe Directorate for Youth and Sport (Council of Europe 2007). As newer developments point towards increasing skills, Zentner

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107. See www.coe.int/en/web/youth-portfolio/online-portfolio (registration required).

and Petkovic make the case that the question is about what the standards are, what the commonalities in different forms of youth work are, and whether it might be possible to train all youth workers in all forms of youth work, and then have them specialise in one form. They also explore youth work regimes, using a typology of universal/paternalistic approaches, liberal/community-based approaches, conservative/corporatist approaches and Mediterranean/sub-institutionalised approaches, providing country profiles as illustrative examples. The authors conclude the chapter by arguing for joint youth policy and youth work responses across Europe, incorporating related policy areas outside of the youth sector.

In Chapter 24, Tadevosyan and Williamson explore how political and public authorities can be persuaded of the value of youth work in order to support its development and delivery. Exploring issues of the diversity of youth work, the uncertainty of youth work in relation to other policy priorities and the challenges in defining youth work, the authors return to discussions in previous chapters, while also transecting issues in the broader context of policy development and resource allocation. They explore possibilities for inter-sectoral and cross-sectoral co-operation, including the private sector, and identify the potential in the connection to community work, advocating for a more participatory approach in this context. They also discuss possibilities for moving beyond policy rhetoric to ensure real support is provided for youth work. This includes taking into consideration the different starting points of youth work vis-à-vis public bodies concerned with young people, including the tensions and paradoxes within. A final question asks how the youth work sector can concentrate on its own work while also transmitting the results to public bodies and the general public. The authors argue that the claims made for youth work are not yet sufficiently convincing, making the case that further clarification is needed about the motivation to promote and push youth work further. They put an emphasis on the knowledge base, in addition to an emphasis on the connections and contributions of youth work in developing solutions to the challenging social situation of young people in Europe. Tadevosyan and Williamson conclude by arguing that the questions raised may not be all-inclusive but serve as a basis for directing discussions towards a better dialogue and enhanced co-operation.

Changing direction but focused again on the voice of young people, Connolly explores the potential for youth work to respond to the opportunities and challenges of digital media in Chapter 25. The author examines the digital participation of young people in Europe, and young people's skills in navigating this landscape in a safe way. She then maps the current landscape, identifying skill gaps and potential policy and practice implications and solutions. She also draws on the policy imperative to establish, support and expand digital literacy programmes so as to increase children and young people's internet-related competences and support them in benefitting from the opportunities of the online space. The potential for youth work to contribute in this respect is considered. While youth workers acknowledge the need to incorporate technology to varying degrees into practice, the exact nature of this is less clear. The concept of "digital youth work" is explored, with opportunities on the one hand for youth workers to support the young people they work with to develop their skills and competences in this environment, and new opportunities on the other hand to undertake youth work in the digital space, through the use of

digital tools. The issue of the digital competency levels of youth workers is identified, along with the need for training and capacity building in this respect. The author concludes by acknowledging the need to consult with young people in a meaningful way, ensuring that digital youth work as defined supports young people in a way that is meaningful to them.

In Chapter 26, Scherr and Yüksel return to the challenge of migration, exploring the role of youth work in relation to the children of first, second and third-generation migrant workers. The authors begin by presenting their argument that young people from migrant workers' families should have access to a range of activities and youth work services that respond to their needs, making youth work with young people no different from "ordinary" youth work. Despite this, the authors argue that there is an assumption that migrant families have different needs and present a challenge. They take a critical look at this argument, using examples such as the discrimination faced by young people from migrant backgrounds in Germany, which highlights the need for responsive services. It is argued that youth work must be cautious not to label young people from migrant backgrounds as different from "ordinary" young people, as this may encourage a withdrawal into communities where their origins and perspectives are respected, which reproduces divisions in society. In this sense, professional youth work requires a sophisticated perspective. The authors conclude by arguing that any conversation about young people from migrant backgrounds should include refugees, and regardless of status youth workers must offer their services to all young people if they regard themselves as a profession with a human rights mandate.

In Chapter 27, Pisani explores further the challenges of youth work in the context of migration. She makes the case that young people move for a variety of reasons and regardless of these reasons have a right to protection, as enshrined in human rights law. Looking at contemporary migration in the context of neo-liberal globalisation and global politics, Pisani identifies the challenge for youth workers in identifying and responding to the multifaceted issues that arise out of displacement. Arguing that the response to the refugee crisis has largely focused on preventing refugees and displaced migrants from reaching EU borders as well as a strategy of secondary containment, Pisani discusses refugees and migrants existing in limbo, denied their human rights. With the absence of safe means to travel, dangerous smuggling networks have developed, exploiting vulnerable refugees. The majority of these refugees and migrants reaching the shores of the EU are young people fleeing civil war, political unrest and persecution. Supporting Scherr and Yüksel's commentary of the risks associated with labelling refugees and migrants as different from the "ordinary", Pisani argues that the politics of securitisation establishes an "us" and "them" dichotomy, with refugees representing the "illegal" body and thereby rendered docile. Pisani argues for an epistemological shift, emphasising the need for power and agency on the part of migrant communities. The challenges for youth work include, among others: strengthening these processes at all levels; providing voluntary, safe spaces; supporting social inclusion; and providing bridging support where necessary. In addition, youth workers must question their place in representing these young people and creating the conditions to engage on their terms. Pisani concludes by arguing that if youth work is committed to tipping the balance of power in favour

of all young people, it must adopt a practice that places the needs of "illegalised" youth at the centre of its practice.

Closing the section on the key challenges of youth work today in Chapter 28, Giannaki explores the role of youth work in dealing with youth radicalisation in times of "(in) security and intensive securitisation". She provides a definition and overview of youth radicalisation, including associated factors and motives, before noting examples of radicalisation as a catalyst for positive change. The author also explores theories of deprivation, discrimination, push and pull factors, and political grievances, and outlines the perceived benefits of recruitment for young people, including social bonds, identity, an outlet for frustration and a sense of security. This is followed by an exploration of the potential contribution of youth work in the prevention of youth radicalisation. Suggestions include supporting the inclusion of young people; the provision of spaces for debate, discussion and engagement; and helping young people to develop a range of intercultural skills and competences, fostering understanding and respect. Giannaki also suggests that youth work can promote a counter-narrative based on human rights and tolerance. Training is required in this regard. Finally, the author reviews the criticisms of the current counter-radicalisation programmes, suggesting that they are grounded in an idea of security and suspicion of certain communities. She concludes that although youth work has the potential to contribute to the prevention of violent youth radicalisation and the promotion of positive radicalisation, if the sector takes part in the counter-radicalisation programmes based on security concerns, it risks losing credibility among young people.

Section II examines the challenges facing youth work and youth workers today, in their cross-cutting multiplicity. The authors interrogate a number of issues, shifting from reflection and analysis to raising new questions, challenging the reader to take a fresh perspective on enduring issues and contemplate emerging challenges for youth work. The chapters are diverse but share the common ground of youth work with and for all young people. The material is stimulating and provocative, and underpins the themes identified in the 2nd European Youth Work Declaration, a number of which are further reflected on in Section III.

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Chapter 16

Finding common ground – Mapping and scanning the horizons for youth work in Europe[108]

Howard Williamson

European Youth Forum campaign poster

A personal preface

My own youth work practice started in 1968 and ended, apart from some very occasional volunteering, in 2003. Most of those 35 years – half as a volunteer, half as a paid part-time practitioner (all "professional", I would hope!) – were spent working in one open youth centre with a huge diversity of young people, by age, gender, ethnicity, background, behaviour, experience, aspiration and need. The centre had opened in 1974. I started there, as a volunteer, in 1979, became the senior youth worker in 1985 and left in 2003. After some difficult final years of recurrent funding uncertainty and related staffing turnover, the "youth and community" centre closed its doors to young people in 2013. It had lasted almost exactly 40 years, to which I had contributed 24 years of my life, and stayed in touch to the bitter end. I wrote a kind of obituary to the centre and the "youth work" I had sought to do there:

> As I reflected on the demise of youth work in a centre I myself served for 24 years I thought about how it gave young people sanctuary, self-belief, new horizons, space to be themselves, advocacy and support, information and guidance, different ideas, and changed plans for the future. My youth work might sometimes have been largely leisure-based provision but at other times it held young people's lives together when everything else in their teenage and young adult lives was going pear-shaped: school, work, lack of work, family relationships, girlfriends and boyfriends, peer groups and more. And I was there for the most troubled and troublesome, dealing unsensationally and often invisibly with issues to do with drugs, crime, sexual health and homelessness (Williamson 2013: 21)

There are many other forms of "youth work", but I remain in touch with many of the thousands of young people (between the ages of around 25 to 55) who bear testimony to what I did for, and with, them in providing a place for them to go, things for them to do, respect for and responsiveness to their ideas, and advice and support when it was sought.

Introduction

This paper is designed not only to look forward to the 2nd European Youth Work Convention and its quest for what we share in "youth work" rather than what divides us, but also to look back in order to shed old light on new problems, as the sociologist Geoff Pearson once did in his attempt to show that "hooliganism" was hardly the new phenomenon proclaimed for it but had always been with us (Pearson 1983). In the same vein, debates about the role, purpose, impact and value of "youth work" have long been present, though particular paradigms of youth work have prevailed at different times, in different places, along the road.

The diversity of youth work has long been celebrated but it can also give the impression, to the external gaze, of a rather chaotic and disputed field of practice. This background paper is therefore, ultimately, designed to provide sufficient food for thought to assist those attending the 2nd European Youth Work Convention in a quest for "common ground". Ongoing differences in our understanding of youth work will, of course, persist – and, hopefully, continue to serve as the basis for robust debate and dissent – but there is also some imperative to explore and celebrate (even crow

about!) those elements of youth work that we can agree we share. We are searching for convergence in our perspectives, rather than our differences.

A theoretical void?

"There is nothing more practical than a good theory". Arguably, the frequently expressed words of Immanuel Kant are no more apposite than in the case of "youth work". So often virtually devoid of attachment to any educational or learning theories,[109] it has rested its case on assertion that is plausible to the converted but subject to profound doubt among those who are more sceptical as to its intentions, actions and impact. Twenty years ago, Hurley and Treacy (1993: ii) were suggesting that "many youth workers are currently free to interpret the concept of youth work according to their own analysis, experience and competence". Conceptually, too often, youth work is routinely defined in terms of what it is not rather than articulating more precisely what it is. It is, for example, not teaching (formal education), social work or counselling (see Jeffs and Smith 1990). There is some value, however, in viewing youth work as occupying various spaces adjacent to these professions, sometimes indeed vacated by them, and struggling with the tensions that arise from that professional inheritance (and continuing political requirements to serve on those fronts), while simultaneously seeking to respond to and work "holistically" to the needs, demands, aspirations and circumstances of young people. The work carried out by the Partnership between the EU and the Council of Europe in the youth field since 2008 on the histories of youth work throughout Europe testifies to such dialectics and tensions. Whether it is called social education, informal education, positive youth development, personal and social development, non-formal education or something else, "youth work" is invariably positioned on the cusp of competing pressures and expectations – between the individual and society, between association and transition, and much more.

The opening words of the recent EU-funded study of the value of youth work in the European Union testifies to its diversity and variety:

> The term "youth work" encompasses a broad range of activities and measures, from those that offer leisure activities, support for inclusion and work to youth civic engagement, and many diverse actions in-between. A range of different actors are involved in the delivery of youth work, sometimes provided by the state and other times by the third sector and volunteers or a combination of the two, with backgrounds in diverse fields and a whole variety of life experiences and motivations. The aims of youth work are equally varied and can target all young people or be more targeted towards certain groups.

> Whilst youth work can suffer from its own diversity, it is also one of its key strengths. However, it is difficult to define exactly what youth work is; even amongst youth workers from different countries, it can be difficult to convey what they do in one country and how it compares to the others. Therefore, to the outside observer it is a daunting task to understand firstly what youth work is and consequently to value the outcomes of

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109. Mark Smith, in his seminal text *Developing youth work* (1988: 81), maintained that the focus of youth work on practice and experiential learning has fomented and sustained a belief that "the only good theory is that which derives from experience, anything else can be dismissed as jargon".

youth activities. People often have pre-conceived ideas about youth work, possibly going back to their own experiences in their own youth. However youth work is a diverse and evolving sector, which cannot be reduced to such approximations. In the youth sector there is a conviction, and as will be shown later in this report, a growing body of evidence, that youth work has a great deal to offer to young people and our societies (Dunne et al. 2014: 40).

Common ground?[110]

"Youth work" in its many guises does indeed have a long and illustrious history, though its purpose, practice and effect has often been debated and contested, and always proved elusive. Starting at some point in the 19th century (see Coussée 2008, Gillis 1974, Savage 2007, Springhall 1977), at least in some European countries, it has been concerned with child-saving, character-building, health promotion, delinquency prevention, cultural rescue (from the perils of American youth culture), autonomy and revolt, retreat, political education, and more.

Thirty years ago, the Republic of Ireland produced a seminal policy report on youth policy, known as the Costello Report, maintaining that the core objectives of youth policy should be the empowerment of critical citizens:

> The vision of a fully participatory democracy has continued to inspire movements of social change and advance. Examples would include worker participation, equal opportunity for women and community development movements at different levels. It is with this vision and in this context that we place the aim of "assisting all young people to become self-reliant, responsible and active participants in society". (National Youth Policy Committee 1984: 15, para 3.6)

In anticipation of International Youth Year 1985, it saw youth work as concerned with personal development and social change:

> Youth work must be addressed to the developmental needs of the individual: through social education, it must be concerned with enabling the individual to develop his/her own vision of the future and the social skills needed to play an active role in society. If youth work is to have any impact on the problems facing young people today then it must concern itself with social change. This implies that youth work must have a key role both in enabling young people to analyse society and in motivating and helping them to develop the skills and capacities to become involved in effecting change. (National Youth Policy Committee 1984: 116, para 11.9)

Youth work has not always been invested with such a radical edge, and arguably has gravitated towards a more functionalist position at many moments and in many

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110. In a very thought-provoking and challenging response to an early draft of this paper, Professor Guy Redig of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel concurred that "there is an intrinsic impossibility to give an accurate description of youth work as an international phenomenon which distinguishes it from other youth facilities and initiatives", that "there exists little consensus on the identification of youth work" and that "it soon becomes clear that one concept (youth work) covers a very divergent practice, too broad even to use a clear policy context". Nevertheless, as a contribution to the discussion, he argues firmly "in favour of promoting and encouraging an active definition process and of formulating a 'common ground'" (Redig 2014).

places. Indeed, 20 years ago, Hurley and Treacy published a delineation of "models of youth work", impressively connecting theoretical perspectives, assumptions about the nature of society, the ways in which youth work was expected to be applied, and the characteristics of that form of youth work. There were four ideal types:

- ▶ character-building (the functionalist paradigm);
- ▶ personal development (the interpretive paradigm);
- ▶ critical social education (the radical humanist paradigm);
- ▶ radical social change (the radical structuralist paradigm).

All, however, assume a form of youth work that is guided and governed by youth workers or youth leaders, a view of youth work that is anathema to autonomous, self-governed youth organisations. They are adamant that they, too, do "youth work" or at least provide a platform for non-formal learning experiences for young people. And here lies the rub: there remains a spectrum of contexts in young people's lives that potentially and practically offer sites for youth work experiences, sometimes facilitated by volunteer and professionally trained adult youth workers, sometimes organised in other ways.

After increasing recognition of the role and place of youth work in young people's lives, as both a space for association and a "transit lounge" to adulthood (Verschelden et al. 2009), the European Youth Work Declaration was launched in 2010 (see below). This followed hot on the heels of the 2009 EU Youth Strategy that put something called "youth work" at the centre of much of its proposed work across all of its fields of action. Youth work of a different kind – one focused on participatory training, experiential learning and capacity building across a spectrum of issues – had already been at the heart of the Council of Europe's youth programme for a number of years. Indeed, the recent framing of "youth work" by the European Commission drew heavily on the thinking of the late Peter Lauritzen who had, from the establishment of the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg in 1972, been a central pioneer of youth work at a European level within the Youth Directorate (now Youth Department) of the Council of Europe. The 2012 Joint Report of the (European) Council and the Commission on the implementation of the renewed framework for European co-operation in the youth field (2010-18) asserted the place of youth work[111] as a support to all fields of action, through cross-sectoral[112] co-operation, and defined youth work as follows:

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111. In footnote 21 of the 2009 European Union Youth Strategy (Council of the European Union 2009), "youth work" is elaborated as: "Commonly-used term for work with young people – 'socioeducational instructors' is the legal term for 'youth workers', as cited in Treaty Article 149(2) of the Treaty establishing the European Community (TEC). By the time of the Council Resolution on youth work (Council of the European Union 2010), this term is used initially and then "hereafter called 'youth workers and youth leaders'". But the term persists: clause 2 of Article 165 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) document (2012) includes the sentence that EU action shall be aimed at "encouraging the development of youth exchanges and of exchanges of socio-educational instructors, and encouraging the participation of young people in democratic life in Europe" (2012, Chapter XII: Education, vocational training, youth and sport).

112. "Cross-sectoral" youth policy is a routinely invoked claim and aspiration, yet it is rarely clearly defined, let alone commonly understood. See Nico 2014.

> Youth work covers a large scope of social, cultural, educational or political activities by, with and for young people. It is about "out-of-school" education and leisure time activities managed by professional or voluntary youth workers and youth leaders. It is based on non-formal learning and voluntary participation.

This perspective – though emphasising activities rather than interaction (association) – lies firmly in the tradition articulated by the "informal education" commentator Mark Smith, who sought to depict youth work and related activity as "local education" (Smith 1994): educational work that is not organised by subject, syllabi or lessons, but a practice that is about conversation and community, a commitment to local democracy and self-organisation, and often unpredictable and risky. These views were elaborated two years later with his co-author Tony Jeffs, around the themes of conversation, democracy and learning (Jeffs and Smith 1996). Such formulations of youth work continue to be asserted (see below), but the idea of a youth work "without guarantee" is, today, anathema to many of those who support and fund youth work, for whom outcomes are increasingly required to demonstrate value and effectiveness (see, for example, McNeil et al. 2012; Cabinet Office 2014).

In August 2014, the English National Youth Agency published its vision for youth work to 2020. Its front cover promulgated the commitment that "In 2020 every young person will have access to high quality youth work in their community". The short paper defines youth work as follows:

> Youth work is an educational process that engages with young people in a curriculum built from their lived experience and their personal beliefs and aspirations. This process extends and deepens a young person's understanding of themselves, their community and the world in which they live and supports them to proactively bring about positive changes. The youth worker builds positive relationships with young people based on mutual respect (NYA 2014a: 2)

Again, however, a very laudable stab at a definition that may well be very pertinent to the English (probably British) context risks falling down in other (political, institutional and cultural) policy and practice environments. The very mention of a "youth worker" would once again produce some level of hostility from the many self-governing youth organisations that execute their own, different, forms of youth work. It is therefore probably wise to avoid trying too hard to capture the complexity of youth work – as Sercombe (2010: 15) has argued, "the attempt to define youth work has a long and diverse history" – and to aim for greater simplicity. I lean firmly towards his (2010: 23-4) assertion that youth work is essentially and distinctively about "facilitating agency": through a range of diverse participatory and experiential practices, young people acquire the capacities and competences for more autonomous, active and responsible decision making about their lives and engagement with their societies.[113] Others – teachers, social workers, psychologists, counsellors – may also facilitate

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113. In line with both Sercombe's perspective and the critical social education paradigm delineated by Hurley and Treacy (1993), the Belgian Steering Group advocated the strengthening of the vision for youth work as a vehicle for youth empowerment: "through giving young people keys to better understand the world they live in/around them, they can forge their own opinion on what they go through, their experiences, and develop a critical thinking" (feedback 14.11.14).

agency but that is not their primary purpose. Whether self-governed or supported, youth work is explicitly and arguably exclusively about building autonomy and self-determination in young people through cultivating their knowledge, skills and understanding in relation to themselves and their social circumstances – about facilitating agency. A related concept has been developed, even more recently, by the South African youth sociologist Sharlene Swartz – the idea of "navigational capacities". She does not refer specifically to the role of youth work. Her interests lie more in establishing theories around youth sociology for the "southern" (developing) world that are distinct and do not simply transfer the ideas from the north. However, as she acknowledges, just as there is the 'north' in the south (a privileged elite), there is also a 'south' in the north, such as Roma youth, migrant youth, the youth in the *banlieues* of Paris, and so forth. These are the very groups of young people towards whom youth work constantly seeks to extend its reach. Swartz and Cooper (2014) link their emergent concept of "navigational capacities" to established issues and challenges such as agency, capitals, power and outcomes, arguing, *inter alia* that young people need to build, and be equipped with, the capacity to understand, articulate, evaluate, confront, embrace, reflect on, and resist their circumstances.[114]

During the 1st European Youth Work Convention, held in July 2010, youth work was also defined quite crisply, in a similar vein to Sercombe's perspective, as the provision of "space and opportunity for young people to shape their own futures".[115] Once more, however, diversity, space, flexibility and fluidity were considered necessary when describing the practice and process of youth work:

> Whatever the definitional debate, it is not contested that different forms of youth work engage with different young people, use different methodologies, address different issues and operate in different contexts. Within this frame of groups, methods, issues and contexts, youth work practice adapts, unfolds and develops over time (Declaration of the 1st European Youth Work Convention 2010, p. 2)

Such a view of youth work is consistent with the ideas of the respected youth work commentators Alan Rogers and Mark Smith, when they talk of youth work practice as being about "journeying together" along a path of learning (Rogers and Smith 2010).

Youth work in (times of) crisis and youth work under pressure?

Throughout Europe, as the "crisis" took hold and produced dramatic consequences for young people and wider populations on account of austerity measures and levels of unemployment, youth work in one form or another was evolving in both positive and negative directions. Since the 1st European Youth Work Declaration of 2010, youth work, though devastated in some contexts (such as the UK), has evolved in different ways. Indeed, the story of youth work over the past few years is very mixed.

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114. Heathfield and Fusco's forthcoming (2015) text arguably interprets these aspirations in relation to youth work: they maintain that youth work is essentially about illuminating and interrupting inequality and injustice. See also Fusco (2011).
115. This was, indeed, the opening sentence in a short note on "Defining youth work" written in 2006 by the late Peter Lauritzen (see Ohana and Rothemund 2008: 369-70).

Self-governed youth organisations, certainly through their European umbrella body, the European Youth Forum, would appear to be thriving. The Council of Europe Youth Department (formerly Directorate) has, for decades, always been committed to the principle of co-management, between civil service governmental representatives and the representatives of youth organisations.[116] In recent years, through the "structured dialogue", the European Youth Forum has cemented its contribution to the direction of youth policy within the European Commission. In stark contrast, there have been drastic cuts to the provision of more open youth work premised upon concepts of "critical social education". Within the UK, opposition to this trend has emerged on a number of fronts, notably the trade union-sponsored Choose Youth! initiative (www.chooseyouth.org/), arguing for a statutory youth service,[117] and the In Defence of Youth Work campaign. Those particular protagonists, in their articulation of youth work, depict it as a practice that is "volatile and voluntary, creative and collective – an association and conversation without guarantees" (see In Defence of Youth Work 2012). This collapse of open youth work, coupled with threats to street-based youth work,[118] despite research-based evidence of, *inter alia* their "first step" contribution to social inclusion (Crimmens et al. 2004; Merton, Payne and Smith 2004), has led to the formation of a new European umbrella body: Professional Open Youth Work Europe (POYWE)[119] – see poywe.org). This advocates the sustenance of open access youth work, supported by appropriately trained and educated youth work practitioners. It has recently embarked on a two-year project designed to map professional open youth work in Europe, supported by the new EU Erasmus+ programme.

Not everything on this front is gloomy. In some countries (Norway, Austria, and the Netherlands for example) street-based youth work continues to be a recognised and relevant element of youth work practice. In Serbia, there has been progressive and impressive development around the infrastructure and operationalisation of broad-based youth work through the establishment of municipal youth offices and the work of the National Association of Youth Work Practitioners (NAPOR). In Finland, notably the Helsinki Youth Department, there has been a modest reduction in resources but a significant diversification of practice. Traditional open and cultural youth work has been supplemented by new forms of online and targeted youth work (LUOTSI), as well as innovative approaches to youth participation (RUUTI), though the latter has not been well received by the established practices of democratic youth representation (see Williamson 2012).

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116 Their respective bodies are the European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ) and the Advisory Council for Youth (AC), composed of 30 young people, 20 through the European Youth Forum and 10 appointed by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe. Together, they constitute the statutory bodies, the Joint Council on Youth. The chairs of the CDEJ and the AC alternate in chairing the Joint Council, which meets twice a year.

117. Youth work as a professional educational practice uniquely inspires, educates, empowers, takes the side of young people and amplifies their voice. Unlike other interventions with young people it combines these elements in a relationship that young people freely choose to make with their youth workers. From this relationship a curriculum of learning and activities is developed that builds on the positive and enhances social and personal education (from the Choose Youth! Manifesto).

118 A transnational network for street-based youth work, Dynamo, was initially supported by funding from the European Commission (DG Employment, through the PROGRESS programme). However, it did not secure further support for the period 2014-17, though the reasons for this are unclear.

119. POYWE is meeting in Rotterdam as I write.

Flanders in Belgium continues to maintain an expressed commitment to youth work, theoretically in line with her former Education Minister's memorable remark that young people did not cause the crisis and therefore it should not be for them to tighten their belts, though the reality has been recent budget cuts at the Community level and the removal of guaranteed support for youth work at the local level. Though the momentum has stalled somewhat, there appears to be a desire in Romania to establish the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award for Young People, in order to provide a framework for all young people, potentially, to engage in this personal development programme.[120]

Finally, as noted above, since 2008, the Partnership between the Council of Europe and the EU in the youth field, with the support of youth authorities in Belgium, Estonia and Finland (and, later in 2015, Luxembourg), has been exploring the many histories of youth work throughout Europe. The 5th History of Youth Work in Europe seminar, held in Finland in June 2014, examined the question of "autonomy through dependencies", suggesting that the place of youth work in societies is never guaranteed and there is always a struggle to secure its position. That position may be achieved by co-operation and concession, where youth work makes its contribution to wider "youth policy" agendas, such as employment, health or offending behaviour. It may, prospectively, also be achieved through innovation and, of course, sometimes by challenge and conflict – yet, at every turn, youth work has to find its place between responding independently to the individual and collective needs of young people and becoming subordinated to the (usually much more powerful) agendas within education and training, employment, health and criminal justice policy.[121] The tensions and contradictions are endemic to youth work paradoxes (Coussée 2008) that cannot be resolved but need to be managed. This is the case for ensuring the professionalism (though not necessarily professionalisation) of youth work, through training, supervision and experience. If recognition and political championship is to be acquired, it is not helpful to have any minister responsible for youth describing youth work as the "can't do, won't do" service.[122]

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120. This award was established in the UK in 1956 at the instigation of Kurt Hahn, a refugee from Nazi Germany who was also behind Outward Bound and the United World Colleges. He was concerned about the "declines" in young people in terms of skills development, physical capability, teamwork and service to others. To address this, with the Duke of Edinburgh's support (Prince Philip had been his pupil when Hahn was headmaster of Gordonstoun, in Scotland), he developed a three-level (bronze, silver, gold) programme of personal development, to be determined at a young person's own pace, incorporating skill, physical activity, teamwork (through an expedition) and service (now volunteering). At the gold level, young people also have to take part in a residential experience.

121. In a speech I made recently in Narva, Estonia (January 2015), at an event addressing the relationship between youth work and youth unemployment, I gave a 40-year history of that relationship from a UK perspective. I concluded that, in different ways and at different times, the role of youth work had been "independent", a "partner", a likely "slave", or "irrelevant". All had implications for both internal and external perspectives about youth work, including its philosophical integrity, political support and funding possibilities.

122. This was a comment made by the then English youth minister Kim Howells in 1997 – he told me that he had said it because that was what his mates in the pub told him about youth workers: they stood, conveying negative messages, between young people and youth training and other opportunities. Howells was also the minister for youth training programmes.

Some more detailed case studies from around Europe

The following case studies represent somewhat impressionistic perspectives on changes in youth work over the past four years in different countries across Europe. They were produced at short notice, following an urgent request in the autumn of 2015 through a variety of channels, by willing volunteers with different knowledge of, and positions in relation to, the "youth work" field. They are, therefore, cameo portraits rather than scientific analyses, but they serve to outline and convey various recent directions of travel for "youth work" in a number of European contexts.

Austria

Beyond some broader trends in the transitions and choices made by young people in Austria, four significant developments in relation to youth work have taken place in recent years that are notable departures from the open youth work and youth representation agenda that had historically informed "youth work" in Austria (see Zentner 2012). First, there are stronger pressures for youth work to have clearer connections with, and demonstrate the way it can support, the goals of formal education and labour market destinations. Second, there are increasingly expectations that youth work should demonstrate its worth, by illustrating the kinds of "qualifications" (knowledge and skills) young people acquire through youth work interventions and experiences, and demonstrating the quality of its practice. Third, young people themselves are increasingly struggling and juggling with the choices they have to make between desired volunteering experiences that may be supported through youth work (and promote their engagement with civil society), and required internship experiences that are necessary to sharpen their competitiveness in the labour market. And finally, as more young people become entrenched in personal identities that are hostile to others, youth work is expected to make its contribution to the "de-radicalisation" of young people and the promotion of their multiple identities and the sense of belonging to a diverse, multi-faith and pluralistic society.

Belarus

It is argued that developments in "youth work" in Belarus are currently on "standby" – "no break through, no major change, not to the better, not to the worse". The broad youth policy framework that had prevailed in the five years to 2010 stalled on account of the new five-year programme Youth of Belarus 2011-15 failing to secure approval by the government. There remains only one youth NGO mentioned in the state budget and circumstances remain difficult, at a domestic level, for the "underground" (shadow) youth sector, although it is active at an international level. The underground national youth council, RADA, is, however, more visible and relevant for young people at local level in Belarus, though there is still no formal dialogue with state youth policy stakeholders. According to an overview of the civic education sector in Belarus in 2013:

> civic education in Belarus is beating around in the water, neither drowning nor floating. The performance factor is getting low. At present you need to make three times more efforts to gain the same results you were getting ten years ago. (OEEC/ODB 2013: 5)

Of course, the ideological system in Belarus is built on incorporating "patriotic" values into all systems of education and socialisation. Nevertheless, as 2015 has been declared "Youth Year", new opportunities will be presented for youth NGOs and more action in the youth field, though there is also a probability of more control by the state. There are new youth initiatives, including "youth work", supported by donors and international networks, promoting values of active participation and democracy, and reaching out to the regions and to more vulnerable and marginalised youth, but these remain largely detached and divorced from the mainstream youth policy of the state.

Belgium – Flemish Community

The distinctive characteristics of Belgium's policy structures, where so-called "cultural" matters (within which youth work sits) are the responsibility of the communities, mean that "youth work" plays out differently in the Flemish, French and German-speaking communities.

Within Flanders, it is possible to consider something called Flemish youth work (see Coussée 2009; Gevers and Vos 2009; Baeten 2012). This is situated firmly as a categorical variant of social-cultural work, quite separate from structures of welfare or formal systems of education. The age range is between 3 and 30, extending to 35 when it comes to political youth work. Youth work in Flanders is carried out mainly by volunteers, and most of the people "in charge" are under the age of 25. There is, as a result, a constant turnover of leaders, which is both dynamic and a vulnerability for youth work.

In contrast to the increasing ascendancy elsewhere in Europe of target-driven and outcome-focused youth work:

> Youth work is not really product driven, the process is more important. Doing and enjoying drown the results. There are sports, music, arts & crafts, but with other methods. Seldom specialised, but with a wide spread of activities. Playing and fun are always crucial more than other, more instrumental targets.

Nonetheless, though youth work in Flanders does not have an explicit ideological profile, it does pay attention to values and concrete social engagement. Until very recently, it has remained detached from commercial engagement and sponsorship, unlike sports.

Youth work is, therefore, a low-cost, free-time offer for young people, an autonomous free space for young people to "play" and have fun. As such, it carries a very positive aura in the society and attracts a strong goodwill policy from the public authorities (though recently, new types of financing, including through sponsorship and funding from the commercial sector, have been put in train). Its weakness, perhaps, lies in its difficulties in reaching more disadvantaged young people, though a relatively small body of paid professional youth workers tends to focus on young people from more deprived sections of the community. Further preoccupations with "professionalism" and with "quality" may, however, threaten the authenticity and strengths of traditional Flemish youth work: striking the "social balance" between these different forms of youth work in Flanders remains the key challenge today.

Belgium – French Community

Although the youth sector in the French Community has relatively low recognition, it is strong in its quality and approach. For youth work, there are two distinct, yet complementary approaches: culture and youth care.

Youth work with a cultural approach is provided through different youth centres (youth clubs, youth information centres and youth hostels), and through youth organisations and informal groups. Myriad projects and actions are developed, through the voluntary and collective efforts of young people, around the values of critical awareness, cultural expression, responsibility and solidarity, in order to foster a sense of citizenship and autonomy.

A different kind of youth work is focused on providing support for "youth at risk". This entails a more individual approach in the context of a young person's environment, especially their family. There is no voluntary work in this sector, though young people are still encouraged to develop collective actions and projects.

Youth work is developed with close consultation with advisory bodies and through strong structural support (for both staff and operational costs) for youth NGOs. All work in the youth sector is premised upon supporting young people's rights, combating discrimination and in particular promoting access to cultural participation by more socially excluded groups. There is a strong emphasis on training:

> One of the key priorities is the training of youth leaders, be it volunteers or paid staff. Training young volunteers or professional staff responsible for activities with young people contributes to the development of "Critical, Responsible and Active Citizens".

The most significant change for this work, in recent years, has been the growing challenges for youth work in the dual context of both the increasing social exclusion of young people (through higher levels of unemployment and decreasing social welfare), and financial pressures on budgets in the youth sector on account of the wider economic situation.

Belgium – German-speaking Community

In a similar vein to the Flemish Community, youth work is considered to be socio-cultural work in the German-speaking Community and is therefore not linked formally to either education and employment or social welfare and family issues. Nevertheless, a new youth strategy plan anticipates a more "cross-sectoral" approach.

The youth work system is "grassroots driven"; the decree on funding for youth work, which constitutes the legal basis for youth policy, provides the framework for supporting it. Youth work is about strengthening young people's social and personal skills through leisure-time socio-cultural activities based on non-formal educational and informal learning processes that promote their participation and autonomy. It is a diverse practice, including the work of youth organisations, open and mobile youth work and youth information.

As a small constituency for youth work, there are some 20 professional youth workers and over 600 voluntary youth leaders, clearly conveying that "the youth work sector in the German-speaking Community can be considered more than active".

The two contemporary challenges concern the evaluation of youth work and the further development of evidence-based youth policy making, and bridging the gap between the youth work activity depicted above and wider youth policy in the interest of forging a more robust cross-sectoral approach.

Estonia

Although the legislative foundations for supporting youth work in Estonia have been described as a "minimalist framework" in terms of the responsibilities of local government, it is suggested that youth work development has been "boosted" since 2010 through the commitment of the Ministry of Education and Science and the support of resources through the European Social Fund.[123] A voluntary quality assessment has been established, to assist with the planning of youth work and the exchange of good practice. This focused on four main goals:

- ▶ non-formal education;
- ▶ inclusion and participation;
- ▶ information and counselling;
- ▶ the environment of youth work.

More recently, attention has been given to whether or not typical municipal youth work provision, in the form of activities established within youth centres, is effective in reaching more disadvantaged, older young people, including those defined as "NEET". Those young people under 18 not only have youth work opportunities provided by youth centres but also possibilities through hobby schools, supported sports activities, summer camps and working camps. Estonia is now grappling with the question as to whether such approaches may be "out of touch and out of time" with the needs of young people, and whether those professionally involved in youth work should be working towards "new ways, goals, methods, co-operation, analyses and assessment".

The European Youth Forum [124]

At the end of November 2014, the General Assembly of the European Youth Forum, held in Cluj-Napoca in Romania (European Youth Capital in 2015), produced a policy paper on youth work, as it is understood within the European Youth Forum and Youth Organisations (European Youth Forum 2014b). It was concerned primarily with delineating the impact of youth work, considering mechanisms for its recognition, and making the case for increased support and funding. Significantly, the paper argues:

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123. For a longer perspective on youth work in Estonia, see Taru, Pilve and Kaasik (2014).
124. This is my interpretation of the EYF paper – the paper was not conceived for this purpose. For a broader understanding of youth work in the European context and the antecedents to the European Youth Forum, see Hansen (2010). For a more contemporary account of youth work and policy at a European level, see Mairesse (2009).

The diversity of youth work, especially in terms of sectorial, organisational and thematic approaches allows every young person to find their way towards youth work. Young people can be both practitioners and beneficiaries. (European Youth Forum 2014b: 3)

Youth work is understood as those practices "undertaken by, with or for youth with the aim of providing a space for young people, for their personal development and for their needs" (European Youth Forum 2014b, p. 3). Youth work rests on the twin processes of education and participation. And, given the "fault line" that is often drawn between the "youth work" that takes place through self-governed youth organisations (cf. those represented by the European Youth Forum) and other forms of "youth work", the paper captures its essence of youth work in an instantly recognisable form:

[Youth work] starts where the young people are at, it provides the space for building interactions, friendships, peer-learning, developing young people's competences, discovering one's capacities and contribute strongly to the physical and emotional well-being of citizens, stimulating solidarity and engagement; outcomes which are often underestimated. (European Youth Forum 2014b: 4)

For the individual, youth work contributes to development and empowerment; for society, youth work attaches young people to civil society as well as to democratic political participation. Finally, evidence of this impact, in order to strengthen wider and stronger recognition of the value of youth work, needs to be advanced through both "top-down" research-based data and "bottom-up" experiential narratives grounded in "self-recognition".

Finland

In the context of Nordic welfare regimes (see Esping-Andersen 1990), youth work in Finland "is seen as one of the services the public sector has to provide for". It has considerable public legitimacy (see Helve 2009; Nieminen 2012; Nieminen 2014). Local authorities have the overall responsibility for ensuring that a range of youth work services is available, though these may be delivered directly and by youth associations and other youth work organisations. These include: educational guidance for young people; facilities and opportunities for pursuing hobbies; information and advice services; support for youth associations and other youth groups; sports, cultural, international and multicultural youth activities; environmental education; and, where needed, youth workshop services, outreach youth work, and other forms of activity (such as the implementation of the Youth Guarantee) according to local circumstances and need.

However, though strongly supported by the national and local state, as a profession (or semi-profession) youth work maintains a considerably degree of autonomy, operating separately and independently from school or social work. Understood as a "non-formal variant of education", youth work sits at the level of national governance within the Ministry of Culture and Education, yet benefits from the "radical decentralisation" that characterises educational policy in Finland. Those evaluation measures and quality standards that do exist have been developed largely through bottom-up processes with the profession itself.

The most significant current development for youth work in Finland is making stronger connections between formal and non-formal education – between school and youth work. According to Kiilakoski (2014), the motivation to develop youth work in schools is based on the following:

▶ to reach those young people who do not attend youth clubs or engage with other youth work services;

▶ to develop schools as youth cultural and intergenerational arenas;

▶ to support group dynamics in schools;

▶ to ensure that individual young people can have secure adult contacts.

No longer should schooling and youth work be isolated "islands" and, despite broader youth policy aspirations for schools to be growth environments for young people and agents for promoting welfare, the strengthening of co-operation between the two has largely derived from the youth work profession itself. Yet such cross-sectoral co-operation (even within the broad landscape of learning, development and education) has raised questions, issues and dilemmas for a youth work practice that, historically, has been associated, and associated itself, with operating in young people's leisure time. Different possible explanations have been advanced:

▶ recognition of the value of more integrated, co-operative practice;

▶ the status and education of youth workers now confers more parity of esteem with teachers, and so they can work in genuine partnership;

▶ an awareness that independent youth work does not reach all young people;

▶ an increased possibility of promoting youth participation, which is a shared agenda between formal and non-formal education.

But this is all work in progress, with few prescriptive expectations or guidelines. Youth work is still exploring the relationship between professional autonomy and more effective collaboration between different professions.

Cross-sectoral or inter-agency collaboration is not the only issue. Finnish youth researchers are currently advocating a multi-dimensional approach to evaluating the service quality of youth work. This should include:

▶ self-reflection by youth work practitioners themselves (see Schön 1983);

▶ data collection on how satisfied young people actually are with youth work services;

▶ more dialogic evaluation with young people, both service users and non-users, to enable them to suggest new ways forward collectively;

▶ expert evaluations of innovative youth work, and "round-table" discussions between researchers, young people and youth workers to debate the continuing relevance of youth work practice and to suggest new ways forward.

One instance of the last dimension concerns the use of game technology for building communities in youth work. In these respects, Finland is both protecting and valuing traditional forms of youth work and "associative life" while simultaneously promoting and pioneering innovative youth work practice through using new technologies to respond to changing needs.

Germany

Youth work in Germany, for different historical reasons, has a mixed and fractured history (see Spatscheck 2009). It has been tied, at different times and in different parts of Germany, to both social and cultural work and, more recently, to community work and formal educational provision. From a broad perspective, most recently, there has been increased funding for services to children and young people but this has largely gone to day care and targeted work for those with problems. Youth work commands less than 10% of this overall resource and has experienced a small decline, though there has been some modest growth in the provision of youth centres and in detached youth work. In general, "the impression dominates that the resources [for youth work] are constantly running short", and there has been a corresponding reduction and "precarisation" (*Prekarisierung*) of the youth work workforce, jeopardising its professionalisation despite the legal status of youth work in Germany's Social Code.

A legal challenge[125] has been launched to compel municipalities to comply with their legal duty to provide infrastructure for youth work, but the pressure on resources is compounded by the demographic decline in the numbers of young people and an often negative image of youth work in Germany.

Current trends include, like Finland, greater co-operation between youth work and schooling though, unlike Finland, this is driven less in partnership and appears to be more about youth work filling in the free time of young people in school rather than complementary curriculum development. Youth work is, arguably, struggling on a broader front in terms of maintaining its autonomy while exercising its responsibilities in relation to other agencies engaged with the learning and development of young people. At the same time, youth work faces the challenge of playing its part in strengthening the public image of child and youth services through a much more self-assured presentation of its contribution to young people's lives.

According to Lindner (2012), youth work in Germany has "adapted itself beyond recognition and lost its clear socio-pedagogical profile"; this has led to the "professional erosion" of youth work. Lindner quotes the head of a western German youth office:

> If you go today in a facility of youth work, you don't have the feeling that you must obligatorily feel good. The offers have not followed the concrete needs of young people. More and more takes place in school. The youth work aside has in the meantime built a wall around itself and says "we are anyway the urchin". There is something like rigor mortis, little dynamics.

Other commentators have noted a mixture of stagnation and frustration among municipal youth workers, arising from the combination of financial cuts, failures to cement coherent youth policy, facilities seemingly resistant to change, distrust between different organisations and an ageing workforce that is not being renewed.

There is currently despondency about youth work in Germany. Youth work needs re-energising, some argue, through the "re-politicisation" of the youth work field

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125. By the German Youth Council and the German Child and Youth Welfare Organisation.

through more proactive engagement ("interference") with youth policy-making processes at all levels.

Italy

As with austerity measures elsewhere in Europe, there has been a detrimental effect on youth work, though in Italy the diminished and diverted resources flowed from a youth sector that had traditionally been weak and relatively unsupported politically. And, particularly in southern Italy, there has been a limited presence of youth organisations to fill some of this gap.

Such difficulties are made worse by a lack of co-ordination and integration across the youth sector, despite the proclaimed efforts of successive governments. There continues to be a serious disconnect between education and training systems and the labour market. However, with the dramatic rise in youth unemployment, education and social services (including youth work) have come to be used as emergency tools to combat social disadvantage and school drop-out. Some youth work resources have been diverted to supporting enterprises with no apparent long-term vision. Youth work through the youth aggregation centres has, it is suggested, become simply a back-up for an inadequate education system.

Innovation, experimentation and development has taken place largely beyond the state, through youth associations, social co-operatives and informal groups of young people. In recent years, they have sourced funding from public and private foundations or from public resources not related to the youth sector.

Such a context of development inevitably produces patchy evolution. Some excellent innovation in youth work (for example, Bollenti Spiriti, which has promoted social inclusion and active participation through cross-sectoral policy in social, cultural, research and entrepreneurial fields) has certainly provided young people with aspirations and competence, but these have had to be realised through emigration, on account of a lack of opportunity at local and regional levels.

The political support and advocacy from local authorities, if not direct provision and funding, is still held to be critical. Public authorities are now becoming aware of the bottom-up recognition of youth workers ("non-formal education trainers") and the role they might play as "multipliers of youth opportunities". But there needs to be a more strategic approach to youth policy development, within which youth work could play a pivotal part, at national, regional and municipal levels. Furthermore, there is a need for youth work itself to diversify, engaging with "other sectors such as environment, health and wellness, mobility, [as well as] education and training". And there needs to be investment in the training and recognition of youth workers, in their role as hubs for facilitating active citizenship and fostering urban and social development. Regrettably, the wider economic situation in Italy has meant that:

> In the last years the priority in the field of youth has been shifted to employment policies thus giving limited attention to non-formal and informal education. This appears like a short-term approach aimed at tackling the youth unemployment emergency and it doesn't promote a wider support system for youth.

Lithuania

In contrast to those parts of Europe where open youth work has never taken root or has, in recent times, been pruned back dramatically, it is the focus of the most recent initiative in youth work in Lithuania, after some 20 years of impressive evolution of a diversity of youth work practices (see Deltuva 2014). Today, Open Youth Centres are being established across municipalities in Lithuania, designed to make youth work accessible to more disadvantaged young people. Unused buildings have been adapted to provide "Open Space". A formal Conception of Open Youth Centres was first debated between 2007 and 2009. It was approved by the Department of Youth Affairs in 2010, laying down the main principles of open youth work, defining the professional approach of the youth worker, and clarifying the roles of local self-government and other actors in the youth field in relation to open youth work practice.

Legislatively, Open Youth Centres are now part of a range of institutions providing minimum care services for young people. And they are enshrined in the National Youth Policy Development Programme (2011-2019), with planning and indicators in relation to funding and staffing clearly defined in order to support the expansion of Open Youth Centres and Open Spaces: "a great deal of attention is being paid to support the implementation of open youth work". An impressive infrastructure is also in place, including methodological tools, training programmes, individual and group counselling[126] sessions for youth workers, monitoring and evaluation, and – perhaps significantly – training courses in youth work and open youth work for those who work in other systems and institutions, such as policing, sports, culture and children's day care.

In terms of the professionalisation of youth work, a certification system for youth workers has been introduced, the activities of Open Youth Centres defined and approved, and the role and responsibilities of the "youth worker" delineated and agreed. In 2014, a Lithuanian Association of Youth Workers was formed, and moves are in train for enshrining a general recognition of youth work within a new chapter of the Law on Youth Policy.

Beyond this impressive commitment to open youth work, Lithuania is also endeavouring to introduce other forms of youth work – detached, outreach and mobile youth work. This will require both legislative support and further capacity building through professional training.

Luxembourg

The youth agenda in Luxembourg, at its start, was firmly embedded in education policy (see Schroeder 2014). The organisational unit responsible for "youth work" had three primary tasks: psychological and educational counselling, the management of grants to youth organisations, and leisure-oriented youth work. However, some 30 years ago, this trio of responsibilities divided, with counselling and grant-making

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126. This term is drawn from the information provided in the case study of Lithuania. I suspect that it is meant to refer to "supervision".

remaining within educational policy and youth work developing separately into a youth policy concept with a more transversal identity not necessarily linked with formal education. Initially an independent, small government department, youth policy was later subsumed within a large department of family affairs and integration. Since 2013, the youth department has returned to education, consolidating its status but also with the expectation of co-operation between diverse educational actors.

This has affected youth work practice in Luxembourg in a number of ways. That practice is anchored by four specialist Educational Centres that are managed directly by the National Youth Service (Service national de la jeunesse – SNJ). Each has its own specialism: media education, sustainable development, outdoor activities, and health and well-being. These are the flagships of youth work, but there are other youth centres with more generalised access and activities, and the Maison des Jeunes that provide local and accessible youth work through very diverse and self-organised activities.

The content and balance of youth work provision has changed, though education and citizenship remain as core themes. Cultural creativity is a "rising star in the youth sector" and there is now also more emphasis on promoting youth autonomy and contributing to the "transition to job life" (which I have interpreted as the "employ-ability" agenda). At the level of youth work delivery, there is now more emphasis on planning, quality assurance, the sharing of good practice, and evaluation: through all this, it is argued, "the youth sector becomes more and more a learning organisation, which consolidates its professional power and autonomy".

Current challenges for youth work include the nature of its relation with formal education, and the integration of youth with childhood policy. And the capacity of independent youth research to influence debate and policy making has diminished significantly in the past few years.

The Netherlands

Though youth policy in the Netherlands is co-ordinated at the national level, direct responsibility for implementation has recently been decentralised to the regional and local levels. Greater coherence and overarching prevention objectives are, politically and professionally, of paramount importance. Each municipality makes its own youth policy and funds youth work, sometimes with co-funding from partners such as schools and foundations.

This transformation agenda has been in place since 2010. A range of measures have been instituted to ensure change from a "problem-oriented" towards a "well-being" approach that, it is hoped, will not only reduce the need for specialist care but also equip young people better with the necessary tools for success in formal education and entry to the labour market. To that end, all professionals working with children and young people, including youth workers, need new competences and interven-tion skills.

Youth work in the Netherlands, comprising voluntary and institutional, youth-led and adult-led provision, "has a broad task" – offering positive activities in the neigh-bourhood, but also acting as a referral agent, and addressing nuisance behaviour.

Municipalities may also finance youth work that is specifically focused on issues such as school drop-out, youth unemployment and delinquency. Youth workers are expected to connect with the three living environments of young people – the home, the school and the neighbourhood – and both to promote personal development and social inclusion. Voluntary youth work practice is largely independent and autonomous, providing positive activities and opportunities for mainly "ordinary kids". They operate "somewhat out of sight of the local authorities". In contrast, adult-led youth (social) work, often positioned in social work or child welfare and commissioned by municipalities, works on a continuum of prevention and support in young people's leisure time and is designed to prevent further problems and exclusion.

There is little recent statistical data on youth work provision and practice, though there had been a significant increase in the number of youth work professionals in the first decade of the new millennium. Since then, there are no data. However, it may be assumed that growth has slowed, probably considerably, in the context of the economic crisis and budgetary limitations. What is certainly clear is the continuation of trends towards more individual guidance of young people at risk, and a stronger targeting of young people presenting problems with the objective of inculcating more acceptable behaviour. For a small group of young people with clustered and accumulated problems, youth workers are expected to work closely and collaboratively on joint programmes around issues such as addictions, housing or criminality.

There are grounds for concern that, in the face of budgetary pressures, more generic youth work and basic community education may lose municipal financial support, though there are also signals that these may be retained as a cheaper option than youth care institutions. But there is little doubt that youth work is being increasingly harnessed to social work approaches, though this is in the context of the development of more generic social work.

Youth work in the Netherlands has no history in documenting its methods or results. This may hinder the further development of youth work and its position with the new local arena of prevention and support for young people. New networks have recently been established to keep youth work on the map and to stimulate the transfer of knowledge in the youth work field, as well as to gather research-based evidence of the contribution that youth work can make to the transformation approaches now prevalent at the local level.

Portugal

There is no formal concept or agreed definition of "youth work" in Portugal (see Orlando Quierós 2014). Nonetheless there is a strong momentum, promoted through the Portuguese Institute of Sports and Youth (IPDJ), for the promotion and development of non-formal education. The practice of "youth work", which encapsulates a broad range of activities with young people, is made possible by a robust infrastructure for the youth sector more generally across each district of the country. There is central co-ordination, local and national partnerships and a transversal approach in many areas, involving other sectors (housing, health, employment), ministries and organisations at all levels of governance. Youth work is:

very closely tied to the frame(work) of intervention in Non-Formal education, and … the two concepts have come to assert themselves in close connection. Nevertheless, the concept of Non-Formal Education is also still publicly diffuse and little recognised, which constitutes an inseparable challenge for Youth Work affirmation.

Over the past four years, non-formal education has become more central in the planning of activities and strategies for youth development and consolidation. In this context, two particular objectives have informed the work of the IPDJ:

▶ the recognition and validation of skills required and acquired;
▶ the establishment of a clear understanding of "youth work" and the role of a "youth worker".

To these ends, there are now measures to develop the profession of a "youth technician", a process that is constructed on a series of consultations and events with actors in the youth field and a corresponding growing interest in the field of youth studies. The challenges are evident: what skills and competences are to be validated, by whom and how?; how to connect and balance volunteerism and professionalisation within the "youth work" field; how to relate non-formal and formal education; forging appropriate links between national initiatives and the European and international level; and considering the education and training methods that may be necessary. Portugal is currently addressing all these themes.

Romania

According to Mitulescu (2014: 81-2), "Romania does not have much of tradition in what is today called 'youth work'", and most Romanian people "have no clue about the meaning of 'youth work'". Mitulescu concludes (2014, p. 88) that

[m]ost of the developments in the field of youth work and youth policy do not fit well with current definitions and frameworks for youth work in terms of voluntary participation, equal treatment of participants, and professional youth workers.

…

There have been some attempts to professionalise informal learning, but all have been abandoned too early, before results were obtained.

Seemingly, this story continues. The "youth work" that takes place in Romania is primarily delivered by volunteers and it is significant that, since 2011 (the European Year of Volunteering), work has taken place on updating the Law on Volunteerism. This was achieved in 2014: volunteers now benefit from a certificate outlining their competences developed through the services and activities they have provided. It is believed that this will be beneficial for entering the labour market. Moreover:

The law is essential for the youth work field as it will definitely give a structure to the volunteers' management mechanisms and is of high interest for young people.

The other significant development in recent years has been an initiative supported by the European Social Fund focused on standards in "youth work" and the training and certification of "youth workers". However, since the end of the project, no clear

evidence has been provided on how these newly trained "youth workers" have been using their newly acquired certification; there are certainly few occupational prospects in the labour market. Further training of "youth workers", using European funds, has been provided through the National Agency on Community Programmes on Education and Professional Development. However, no research has evaluated these initiatives and there is still no professional association of "youth workers" that might serve as a partner for dialogue with the public authorities.

There remains weak advocacy for youth work in Romania, with uncertain communication between the civil sector (the VOLUM Federation), the National Youth Council, the National Agency (which is a governmental agency subordinated to the Ministry of Youth and Sports)[127] and grassroots practitioners of youth work. The vast majority of youth work continues to be done on an ad hoc basis by volunteers and the "youth work" that is done appears to remain contingent on external funding opportunities and framed by the expectations of those funding bodies. Within Romania, there are still huge challenges regarding the social recognition of a profession of youth work and of the value of the activities conducted by professional, though usually still voluntary, youth workers.

The Russian Federation

There have been some significant developments and debates about youth work and broader youth policy in the Russian Federation over the past five years. This, however, is simply consistent with the recurrent changes that have taken place at all levels (national, regional, federal, local) in the past 25 years. There has been constant restructuring, legislative reform and practical initiatives, some held by various stakeholders in the youth field to be positive and some less so.

Recent trends, however, have been the cause of concern and controversy, with policy increasingly formulated from the centre in the interests of the state (rather than young people), with little support or attention to youth research. Responsibility for youth policy has recently transferred to the Ministry of Education and Science, which will soon be preparing a new national youth strategy. The current strategy (2006-16), under the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Tourism, set a framework of priorities and issues but did not prescribe activities in the youth field, leaving regional bodies responsible for youth to develop different and distinctive measures through local legislation reflecting the different realities facing young people across the Russian Federation. This approach is now perceived to be under threat, with the prospect of a federal law on youth and a move to a unified top-down approach.

The contribution of youth NGOs to policy making is now minimal: they are "not in the picture any more", and state institutions prefer to implement youth work activities

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127. The paper provided for me does not acknowledge some serious political determination by the State Secretary for youth to promote a youth strategy and framework for youth development. I am aware of this for other reasons and respect the integrity and commitment of the minister, though I understand the scepticism that prevails amongst many in the youth field, especially given the lack of sustainability of youth initiatives that arise recurrently as a result of frequent changes in the political administration.

and projects "on their own". The position of youth NGOs has been further weakened as a result of legislation concerning "foreign agents" and other financial reporting requirements. In terms of the reach and focus of youth work in the Russian Federation, it tends to be concerned with either active and gifted young people or those who are most vulnerable, "leaving those who are 'in between' with no special attention".

In parallel with a lack of youth participation in decision making and significant obstacles to youth NGOs developing youth work initiatives and activities is the increasing focus by the state on the patriotic upbringing of young people. This embraces a spectrum of activities, from social responsibility in the community to commemorating long-dead war heroes: "almost everything can be fixed" under this expression. In summary, there is constant churn in the youth field but a strengthening concentration of central control over the activities that are deemed permissible and will be supported by the state.

The Slovak Republic

Striking positive developments in youth work have materialised in Slovakia in recent years. Within a framework of wide consultative and cross-sectoral youth policy formulation and implementation, and a stronger focus on the qualitative contribution of youth NGOs receiving government funding to the strategic goals of a new youth strategy (2014-2020), there is commitment and momentum towards establishing a sustainable infrastructure for the delivery of youth work that is:

> flexible to answer [the] fast changing needs of young people with trained youth workers able to provide necessary support for young people and create attractive learning environments for them to grow.

Political changes have postponed, but not abandoned a new Youth Work Support Act intended, among other things, to transform and modernise the work carried out by youth centres. Despite some opposition, there is broad consensus that youth work needs to revise its focus from largely preventative and leisure interventions and activities "towards non-formal education … developing competences of young people needed for their future working and social engagement". Accompanying this changing perspective on the role of youth work has been the emergence of the profession of youth work, with the classification of youth work competencies, the profiling of youth workers into five categories, and the pioneering of university-level interdisciplinary studies to become a youth worker.

The United Kingdom

There is a long tradition of "youth work", in many diverse forms, across the United Kingdom (see Davies and Gibson 1967; Davies 1999). At the very moment, however, that the EU was finally celebrating a place for youth work at the very heart of its "youth policy" deliberations, the new British Government administration was applying austerity measures that prospectively would sound the death knell for many forms of youth work at the municipal level. At central government level, there has been little political will to support "youth work", although the situation is somewhat different in each of the four parts of the UK (youth work is a devolved responsibility alongside

most "youth policy" domains such as education, health, social services and housing) and arguably most severe in England.

On International Youth Day 2014, one of the main trades unions for youth workers released a damning report revealing that, in the two years since April 2012, at least £60 million of funding was withdrawn from youth services in the UK. Over 2 000 youth work posts have been cut, 350 youth centres have closed, and 41 000 youth service places and 35 000 hours of outreach youth support have disappeared (Unison 2014). The main trends for youth work identified in England, beyond the ubiquitous reductions in services, have been the shift from open access to targeted activity (with professional youth work staff sometimes moved to support social care intervention), the growth of commissioning (though the limited development of other models of youth service delivery), the vulnerability of the local NGO sector (but the emergence of small social enterprises and community interest companies), and the protection of "youth voice" but its separate delivery from "youth work" (NYA 2014b).

Wales

2015 is the 30th anniversary of the first UN International Youth Year (concerned with the three themes of participation, peace and development) that sparked a range of initiatives in the youth field. In Wales, it led to a separate direction in youth work from England, through the formation of the Wales Youth Work Partnership and the establishment of the Wales Youth Forum, as well as Youthlink Wales, one of the first peer-led participatory youth organisations, concerned with the prevention of HIV and substance misuse (see Williamson and Wilson 1988).

The Wales Youth Work Partnership evolved into the Wales Youth Agency in 1992. For 15 years, the WYA led the field on youth work issues as diverse as quality standards for youth worker training and staff development, collaboration between the statutory and voluntary sectors, voluntary youth organisation support and development, youth information and youth worker resources and information, and youth participation. Over time during the 1990s, it added responsibilities for European youth programmes (exchanges, mobility and initiatives), the funding of youth organisations, youth work in schools, and health promotion measures such as smoking cessation programmes. It had its funding withdrawn by the Welsh Assembly Government in 2005.

The Wales Youth Forum evolved, over time, into Funky Dragon, the Children and Young People's Assembly for Wales, promoting and ensuring youth voice and participation at local, regional and national levels. Beyond, it provided Welsh delegates for United Kingdom ("national") youth representation at European and global levels. Amidst considerable controversy, its funding as an "independent" youth council was withdrawn by the Welsh Government in July 2014 and responsibility for representative youth participation was contracted to Children in Wales. There is now no "National Youth Council" for Wales.

The most recent National Youth Work Strategy for Wales (Welsh Government 2014) is firmly harnessed to the re-engagement and support of more marginalised young people, notably those who are defined as "NEET" (not in education, employment or training). But it celebrates the prospective role of youth work in this agenda. The opening words of its Ministerial Foreword are as follows:

High quality youth work has a crucial role to play supporting many young people to achieve their full potential. Through informal and non-formal educational approaches, effective youth work practice builds the capacity and resilience of young people and can change young people's lives for the better.

Yet many local authorities have withdrawn support for more generic, "open" youth work and have focused their dramatically diminished public resources very explicitly on the most disadvantaged young people, with referral and appointment systems, rather than voluntary and more spontaneous involvement, shaping so-called "youth work" provision. At the first meeting of a Youth Work Reference Group convened by the Welsh Government, in December 2014, the Deputy Minister for Skills and Technology paved the way for a feasibility study looking at the funding and sustainability of youth work, including the possible establishment of a National Youth Service for Wales.

But what might "youth work" do?

There is not only a recurrent, perennial search for some tight consensual definition of the concept of "youth work" (see above), but also, increasingly, a quest for defining its impact and outcomes (McNeil et al. 2012). In both cases, any real consensus remains elusive, despite the assertion in a recent review of the youth work literature that "youth work is attempting to make an ambitious contribution to improving outcomes for young people" (Dickson et al. 2013: 1).

That absence of consensus means that there is room for considerable manoeuvre in outlining and interpreting the roles and possibilities for youth work. It is, indeed, the elasticity of the concept that has permitted European institutions to move some way from the classical position that youth work is focused holistically on young people's interests in a voluntary relationship informed by some key values around rights, entitlements, participation and empowerment to a more socially attached position where youth work can address a range of contemporary social concerns, not least youth unemployment and "employability", health risk behaviour and even deviance and criminality. This is certainly the position adopted by the European Union Youth Strategy (Council of the European Union 2009; see also European Commission 2009). Youth work, it is believed, can help to get young people back on track or keep them on the right track in their transitions to adult citizenship, active participation and insertion in the labour market.

Though there does need to be some caution in attaching too much hope and outcome expectation that youth work can have some direct effect on these public issues (which are also often "private troubles"[128] for young people, and therefore legitimate interests for the practice of youth work), the many histories of youth

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128. The legendary sociologist C. Wright Mills argued that one of the central challenges for any public sociology was to analyse the "private troubles" of individuals in order to convert them, where necessary, into "public issues": "Do not allow public issues as they are officially formulated, or troubles as they are privately felt, to determine the problems that you take up for study … Know that many personal troubles cannot be solved merely as troubles, but must be understood in terms of public issues …" (Wright Mills 1959).

work (Verschelden et al. 2009; Coussée et al. 2010; Coussée et al. 2012; Taru et al. 2014) show quite clearly that it provides both a forum for young people's associational life and a transit zone as young people move from childhood to adulthood and within which youth work can provide a spectrum of support in young people's navigations of those increasingly complex and protracted transitions. Research on youth work in England (Merton et al 2004) suggests that youth work can contribute to personal (psychological and motivational) change in young people that is often a critical prerequisite for their subsequent positional (structural) change, whether that is labour market insertion or desistance from offending or health risk behaviour. But that research is insistent that youth work must not be judged on its direct capacity to enhance employability or reduce crime.[129] Similarly, McNeil et al. (2012), though less specifically focused on youth work and more interested in the impact of broader "work with young people", maintain that it is the intermediary social and emotional capabilities engendered by that work that have value to all young people in a variety of ways, including clear and evidenced links to concrete outcomes such as educational attainment, employment and health.

Nonetheless, perhaps more contentiously, in its articulation of "a new role for youth work", the European Commission's paper that paved the way for the current EU Youth Strategy is insistent that youth workers have a pervasive, central and therefore potentially direct contribution to make to all of its strategic objectives:

> Youth work is out-of-school education managed by professional or voluntary "youth workers" within youth organisations, town halls, youth centres, churches etc., which contributes to the development of young people. Together with families and with other professionals, youth work can help deal with unemployment, school failure, and social exclusion, as well as provide leisure time. It can also increase skills and support the transition from youth to adulthood. Despite being "non-formal", youth work needs to be professionalised further. Youth work contributes to all fields of action and their identified objectives. (European Commission 2009: 11)

Such expectations have implications for the independence, autonomy and role of youth work and diverge considerably from the idea of "journeying together".

The value of youth work?

There is growing testimony to the value of many different forms of youth work, for different reasons. From street-based work that engages with young people on their own terms (Crimmens et al. 2004), through youth club work (see McCardle 2014), to autonomous youth organisations (Souto-Otero et al. 2012), research is now demonstrating the value of youth work. Despite contrary "evidence", epitomised by the memorable and widely reported comment made by a former British children's

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129. There is, possibly, a line to be drawn from (not between!) promoting initiative and creativity in young people through youth work and fostering enterprise and entrepreneurship – but it is a dotted line, not a clear connection. However, the link was made initially many years ago as a result of the Petra programme: see Williamson et al. (1993); De Wachter and Kristiansen (1995).

minister that "it is better to stay at home and watch TV than attend a youth club",[130] recent studies of youth work have pointed to the multiple benefits accruing from youth work opportunities, interventions and experiences.

Youth work, broadly defined, can – so it is argued – make a critical contribution, *inter alia* to social and economic inclusion, healthy lifestyles, volunteering, youth (political and other) participation, employability and entrepreneurship. For example, a recent research study commissioned by the European Youth Forum suggested that non-formal learning has a vital role to play in preparing young people for the labour market. The 2012 study, carried out in co-operation with the University of Bath and GHK Consulting on the impact of non-formal learning in Youth Organisations on Young People's Employability, showed that among the six "soft skills" most demanded by employers, five of these are developed through involvement in youth organisations. These skills are: communication, teamwork, decision making, organisational skills and self-confidence. As former EU Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth Androulla Vassiliou registered in her foreword to the report:

> As our workplaces change under the twin impulses of globalization and technological progress, so do the skills required by employers.
>
> ...
>
> Formal education aside, it is increasingly evident that the learning outcomes acquired in non-formal and informal settings, for example through volunteering or participation in youth organisations, play a key role in providing young people with so-called "soft" skills which are highly valued and appreciated by prospective employers.
>
> ...
>
> It is in my view essential that this experience is adequately recognised. My proposal for a Council Resolution on the validation of non-formal and informal learning indicates concrete ways to improve formal recognition of youth work and other non-formal learning opportunities. (Souto-Otero et al. 2012: 11)

Developments relating to youth work at a European level since 2010

The following section provides an outline of, and commentary on, some of the most significant documentation to have emerged at European level in the five years since Belgium's Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2010.

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130. This comment was drawn from findings from the British birth cohort study of children born in 1970 (Feinstein et al. 2005), suggesting that those who attended youth clubs around the age of 16 had worse outcomes in their lives at age 26 (in 1996). The political interpretation of these data has been challenged even by those academics who worked on the original analysis (see Feinstein et al. 2006).

A contribution to youth work and youth policy in Europe

Belgium's Presidency of the European Union in 2010, the second of the first "trio" (following Spain and preceding Hungary), was firmly focused on youth work. In the same week of July 2010, the Flemish Community held the 1st history of youth work conference (though the third in the "history" seminar series) and the EU Presidency event hosted the 1st European Youth Work Convention. As the report of Belgium's EU Presidency contribution to the youth field asserted in relation to youth work: "the time is ripe" (eu-trio.be 2010: 5). But the conference made the following important observations:

> In all countries youth workers have to rethink their function and position in the social, cultural, economical and political integration of young people … As the social and political context is changing, youth work has to reflect on its identity and its relation to the state and to other socialisation institutions and environments (eu-trio 2010: 7)

The conference noted that, from an historical analysis, there were three primary perspectives on youth work: regional, thematic and methodical. Within a shared mission, therefore, that may be universally agreed, there is significant diversity around these three points of a triangle. Youth work evolves and adapts within it, in the broader context of anticipated educational, social, economical, recreational and political functions. A key conclusion of the conference was that the diversity of youth work must be celebrated, indeed defended: "neglecting or even destroying this diversity inevitably leads to reinforcing processes of marginalisation and exclusion" (eu-trio 2010: 10). And the conference also reminded us that youth work must always be attractive to young people – education can be fun, and fun can be education.

The 1st European Youth Work Convention was a showcase for youth work practice, an attempt to find some unity in the diversity of youth work, and an opportunity for consolidating and advancing contemporary policy processes on youth work at a European level. The multi-level focus, using multi-dimensional methods, framed around youth work themes for a formal resolution (see below), with facilitators and rapporteurs to capture emergent ideas and messages, contributed to the production of a declaration that sought to connect past, present and future thinking and practice in relation to youth work.

The Declaration of the 1st European Youth Work Convention

Critically, the declaration asserted that "while politicians need to gain better knowledge of youth work … youth workers also have to get a better insight of how policy is made". The declaration continued:

> Youth workers should be involved in policy-making discussions in broader policy fields which affect the lives of young people; they should also be consulted on policies that may have more indirect effects on young people. It is important that policy makers in the youth field, but also in other fields engage both with organised and less organised young people. Youth organisations play a significant role in these processes. (Declaration of the 1st European Youth Work Convention: 3)

The declaration welcomed the "structured dialogue" processes but argued that in the future there should be a "broader base for this dialogue and an increased application of co-management practices". Youth work should also become less isolated and more connected to wider policy sectors and agendas affecting young people, though not at the expense of undermining the trust and respect that is the mainstay of youth work's relationships with young people. This was but one of the seven key headings embodied within the declaration:

▶ position and cross-sectoral co-operation;

▶ information, impact and effect;

▶ youth work for all and in diversity;

▶ the quality of practice;

▶ competences, training and recognition;

▶ mobility and networking;

▶ sustainable support and funding.

The first step, following this declaration, was to secure a formal resolution on youth work by the European Union. Though this was achieved, further steps have been patchy – more work has been done on most themes, but despite additional evidence on the value of youth work and seemingly greater political commitment at a European level, there remain significant challenges around recognition, training and resourcing of youth work in many parts of Europe.

Resolution of the Council of the European Union on youth work

In November 2010,[131] after the youth work deliberations during Belgium's Presidency of the EU, the Council of the European Union backed a resolution that agreed that the following principles should be taken into account in implementing this resolution:

Young people, youth organisations, youth workers and youth leaders, youth researchers, policy makers, other experts in the youth field should be involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of specific youth work initiatives at all levels;

The roles and responsibilities of any actors involved within their respective spheres of competences, should be respected;

Better knowledge and understanding of youth work needs to be gathered and shared;

Instruments mentioned in the renewed framework should be fully used to integrate a youth work perspective and to implement specific youth work initiatives;

Youth work should pay particular attention to the involvement of children and young people in poverty or at risk of social exclusion.

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131. At the same time, the Council also passed a resolution on children, youth and children's rights (see Council of the European Union 2010b).

The resolution exhorted both member states and the European Commission to strengthen their resolve and community to youth work and invited both to:

Create better conditions and more opportunities for the development, support and implementation of youth work at local, regional, national and European level.

Fully acknowledge, raise awareness of, and reinforce the role of youth work in society.

Enable youth work to further develop its quality.

Support the development of new strategies or enhance existing ones for the capacity building of youth workers and youth leaders and to support civil society in the implementation of appropriate forms of training for youth workers and youth leaders.

Identify different forms of youth work, competences and methods that youth workers and youth leaders share, in order to develop strategies for enhancing the quality and recognition of youth work.

Promote the employability of youth workers and youth leaders and their mobility through a better knowledge of their qualifications and the recognition of the skills acquired from their experiences.

Promote and support research in youth work and youth policy, including its historical dimension and its relevance for youth work policy today.

Make sufficient information on youth work available and accessible via mechanisms like for instance European and national campaigns on youth work, and to enhance synergies and complementarity between initiatives of the European Union, the Council of Europe and other actors on local, regional, national and European level.

Promote opportunities for exchange, cooperation and networking of youth workers and youth leaders, policy makers and researchers at local, regional, national, European and international level.

Within the context of youth work, promote, where appropriate, the development of a systematic assessment of skills and competences required for any form of training aiming at acquiring knowledge and upgraded skills.

This is a striking and impressive aspirational list that, if implemented, would certainly confirm that "the time is ripe" and position youth work firmly in partnership with formal education and vocational training in contribution to the learning and development of young people. At a European level, certainly, some of the recommended research was soon put in train and further momentum was secured around the recognition and quality of youth work.

Participation studies:
LSE Enterprise (2013) and MYPLACE (2014)

Youth participation is not the exclusive domain of youth work, nor is it youth work's singular raison d'être. It is, however, central to, and embedded within the practice of (democratic styles of) youth work whereas it is an additional or explicit feature of other "work with young people". Moreover, youth work not only equips young people with the competences and confidence to engage in wider forms and platforms for youth participation, but also advocates for the involvement of young people in decision making on matters of relevance and concern to them, in keeping with Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. At a European level, it is the "structured dialogue" that characterises formal youth participation in such decision making (see Williamson 2015). This has been in place since 2010 and is organised around "trios" of EU Presidencies. Four themes have so far been addressed: youth unemployment, participation in democratic life, social inclusion, and (now) empowerment. The second theme took place in parallel with a significant EU-funded research study on youth participation in democratic life (LSE Enterprise 2013). This drew conclusions of relevance to youth work, including the following observation that there was an urgent need to make sure that:

> there is structural public funding for places and spaces where adults and youth can come together as part of communities to help each other by volunteering time and skills – e.g. youth centres where older young people mentor younger youth and children or old people's day centres where youth come to read to older people and learn a skill. (LSE Enterprise 2013: 164)

With particular reference to more "excluded" young people, the report's almost final parting shot is emphatic:

> One of the most important ways in which "excluded" youth are being included in the social fabric of a local community is through what we call civic spaces, which include youth clubs, community (media) centres, libraries and sports clubs. Such spaces offer young people from various backgrounds, but particularly for those from disadvantaged backgrounds, a structure, stability, and opportunities to volunteer or to receive training and to learn transferable skills. (LSE Enterprise 2013: 165)

More recently, another research study concerned with Memory, Youth, Political Legacy and Civic Engagement (MYPLACE) has drawn similar conclusions. The MYPLACE study – a 14-country study of how young people's social participation is shaped by the shadows (past, present and future) of totalitarianism and populism in Europe – drew some important conclusions with prospectively important implications for the role of youth work:

> While on the whole there is support for democracy as a system, many young people seem to feel that it is not working well for them … the majority of respondents in most countries felt that politicians are not interested in young people like them.

The policy implications of its findings are that there is an urgent need:

> to advance and reinforce a genuinely democratic way of life, rather than focusing primarily on controlling youth unrest and its potential power to destabilise society. Politicians need also to show that they are giving sufficient priority to addressing the concerns and difficulties experienced by young people compared to other groups. [Agenda for the MYPLACE Policy Forum, 20th November 2014, Greater Birmingham and West Midlands Brussels Office, Brussels]

The EU youth work study

The vast majority of those in the youth (work) field are, unsurprisingly, delighted with the findings of the recent study of youth work across the member states of the European Union (Dunne et al. 2014). Evidence of the value of youth work is often unequivocal. Though there is certainly sometimes a strange choice of national "youth work" case studies – many are quite new and by no means established, small-scale and little known, some arguably not "youth work" at all – the evaluation commendably endeavours to capture an impressive range of youth work projects and practice.

Acknowledging the variations in defining youth work and the diversity of its practice, the report opens with a flow chart that depicts both the stepping stones within "youth work" and its connection to wider society. The "meaningful activities" within different forms of youth work contribute to the "personal development" of young people that, in turn, produces empowerment, emancipation, tolerance and responsibility. It is these characteristics that combine in different ways to result in:

- ▶ participation in democratic societies;
- ▶ prevention of risk behaviour;
- ▶ social inclusion and cohesion.

Or so the analysis goes. The report outlines various trends in youth work, maintaining that as youth work has adapted and evolved it "is gaining increasing prominence on the political agenda at the EU and Member States levels" (Dunne et al. 2014: 6). That prominence, where it exists, has however led to further aspects of change, whether externally demanded or self-directed, including a stronger focus on measurable outcomes, evidence of impact, and targeted youth work (in terms of both social groups and social issues), especially in relation to the labour market. Some would argue that this calls into question the very nature of a "youth work" constructed on universality and youth autonomy. Nevertheless, it is broadly agreed that youth work has always had to find and strike a balance between competing demands and agendas, so in some respects the current pressures and expectations are nothing new. The inherent contemporary tension, however, according to the report, is between the value of youth work processes and a clear specification of measurable outcomes:

> The potential disconnection between the purpose and mission of youth work and the expectations of outcomes is a growing issue. There is a concern that youth work is increasingly expected to deliver what had previously been carried out by other policy sectors. Some of those within the sector can see this trend as putting extensive pressure on the sector and can take youth work away from its original purpose. On the other hand this indicates that there is growing awareness of the possible contribution of youth

work. Though in many countries this does not yet come hand in hand with funding frameworks and commitment to develop the youth work sector. (Dunne et al. 2014: 7)

But even that, for some member states, is not particularly new (see Williamson 1993). What the report does is to identify evidence that "successful youth work practice can result in a range of positive outcomes for young people" (Dunne et al. 2014: 7) and that, beyond the individual level outcomes, youth work yields social benefits both among young people as a social group and between the generations, as well as contributing directly and actively to many elements within each of the eight fields of action[132] that give shape to the most recent European Union Youth Strategy (Council of the European Union 2009; see also European Commission 2009).

Recognition: the "Strasbourg process"

But if the recent EU study conveys a strong sense of the value of youth work, why is any real recognition of youth work – either at international or national levels – still so difficult to achieve? The question has been an active one in some countries for many years (cf. the UK Ministerial Conferences on the Youth Service 1989-1992) but especially prominent in Europe since the Lisbon strategy was articulated in 2000. This set out the priority objectives of the EU for the next ten years within a vision expressed by the Heads of State and Government of the EU: "To make the EU the most competitive and dynamic knowledge based economy in the world capable of sustaining more and better jobs and with greater social cohesion". There was considerable emphasis, predictably, on formal and vocational education and training, but also on lifelong and "life-wide" learning encompassing the spectrum of formal, non-formal and informal learning for the promotion of personal fulfilment, active citizenship, social inclusion and employability. Over the next few years, there were recurrent political and institutional exhortations to value non-formal learning, including youth work, through identifying and assessing its contribution and ensuring its recognition and validation (see Council of Europe European Commission Youth Research Partnership 2004). Yet even by 2004, paragraphs 15 and 16 of the same document, under the more general sub-heading of "Need for social recognition of learning in the youth field" were registering the points that:

> Despite all visibility and undisputed success rates, the youth work record in education, training and learning is easily overlooked or simply made a sub-category within education by decision-makers and stakeholders in established fields such as education and vocational education and training. But, youth work is more than a sub-category of education and training. It has to be seen for its own sake, but also for civil society purposes.
>
> …
>
> Non-formal learning as a whole, but particularly in youth activities, is typically undervalued as not being "real" learning. There is a lack of understanding of the benefits of non-formal learning and it is thus necessary to strengthen the awareness of key persons and institutions in society, business and politics, of the main players (the social partners,

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132. Education and training; employment and entrepreneurship; health and well-being; participation; volunteering; social inclusion; youth and the world; culture and creativity.

NGOs, education experts, etc.) and of young people themselves in order to promote non-formal education as an integral part of learning and to enhance its social recognition. (Council of Europe and European Commission Youth Research Partnership 2004: 7)

Seemingly, some level of strategic success was soon afterwards achieved with the European Council resolution (Council of the European Union 2006) on the recognition of the value of non-formal and informal learning within the youth field. Notwithstanding the occasionally inconsistent terminology, the message had been very clear and was now conferred with significant support. But that was a decade ago. Since then, what has become known as the "Strasbourg process" has, with mixed success and progress, sought to consolidate, sustain and strengthen the case for the recognition of youth work and non-formal learning across Europe. An analysis of European developments pointed to momentum in policy, tools, studies, stakeholder engagement, and connections to wider developments in mapping qualifications and competences at a European level (Jugend für Europa/SALTO-YOUTH 2012). After a number of events, publications and political declarations, which are reasonably considered to be stepping stones and milestones, there is considerable optimism that it is "getting there" (see Youth Partnership 2013). Certainly, there have been significant developments in the mapping and recording of competences acquired through non-formal learning. A wide range of "recognition instruments" now exists;[133] whether or not such certification is in fact recognised beyond the youth field – and if so, to what extent and in what ways – remains an issue that has been insufficiently addressed and, arguably, avoided. Nevertheless, the latest significant development in terms of formal political recognition of (and support for) youth work has been the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in response to "ENTER!", the long-running training programme established by the Council of Europe Youth Department on the access of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to social rights (see Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe 2015).

Political recognition is one (albeit important) thing;[134] recognition in the (many different segments of the) labour market and in the diverse sections of civil society is something rather different. Barbara Wootton (1978), the eminent British social scientist and part-time magistrate, once wrote that a young offender trying to anticipate his (*sic*) sentence in the juvenile court was like a "drunken man trying to hit a moving punch-ball with a wobbling hand". The analogy is perhaps forced, but it can inform the recognition debate: the punch-ball is the destination of young people (labour market and civil society), the hand is the unpredictability of political understanding and advocacy, and the "man" is youth work, in all its guises. At the heart of the matter is the sobriety (quality) of youth work: consistency and predictability in the outcomes from the diversity of youth work practice would no doubt strengthen

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133. One of the best known and most widely used is the Youthpass (www.youthpass.eu/en/youthpass, accessed 19 March 2017), which has been a significant achievement of the EU and made available to thousands of young people. This recognition tool could, it is argued, "inspire recognition practices at national level (as foreseen in the Erasmus+ Regulation)" (feedback to the draft report).
134. Indeed, in the signing of a new youth partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe for the period 2014-2016, on 7 April 2014, an expressed aim of the new partnership is "to improve the knowledge on youth and contribute to the development of youth work and the promotion of its quality and recognition".

political recognition and championship and enhance its credibility and currency in many of the destinations to which young people seek to arrive.

The EU study of the value of youth work (see above) talks about "successful" youth work, probably meaning "effective" youth work, and "effective" youth work clearly has to be defined and guided by "quality".

Expert Group on Youth Work Quality Systems in EU Member States and the role of common indicators or frameworks

In 2013, under the Republic of Ireland's Presidency of the European Union, with its particular youth focus – during the "trio" concerned with social inclusion (Ireland, Lithuania and Greece) – on the quality of youth work, an expert group was formed to examine youth work quality systems and to consider the development of common indicators and frameworks.[135] At some risk of reinventing the wheel, given everything that has gone before, the expert group will seek to illustrate the practice, process and products of youth work (for this kind of discussion, see Ord 2007) and the impact of youth work for the engagement, development and progression of young people. The publication of its conclusions is imminent.

Predictably, the expert group has encountered the challenge of the huge diversity of youth work provision, and the competing understandings that make any foundation of consensus immensely difficult to secure. Nevertheless, the aspiration remains for the group to construct a clearer map of the youth work "landscape"[136] and the conditions required to ensure the best possible quality of youth work development and implementation. Though a report is not yet published, these are, of course, likely to include issues of youth worker training and competence, and the value base and ethical framework that guide the practice of youth work (see also Sercombe 2010).

Of greater political interest and concern will be answers to the question of impact and outcomes, at both the level of individual young people and for society more generally. Plausible indicators of such outcomes will, presumably, have to be set against the resources required for effective delivery, if some measure of quality is to be determined. As a number of youth work experts have noted verbally in recent conference contributions, few dispute the benefits of youth work but when public resources are requested or required to support it, then expectations of outcomes are raised and evidence of a return on that investment is demanded.[137]

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135. The draft terms of reference and members' criteria for the thematic expert group were set out in the Annex to the Council conclusions on the contribution of quality youth work to the development, well-being and social inclusion of young people (see Council of the European Union 2013).

136. A term I first heard used in relation to youth work in 1981, when the great historian of British youth work, Bernard Davies, was introducing the idea of youth work to a cohort of apprenticeship students in training – he talked about the different terrain over that they would travel, with few shared markers to provide direction and the many destinations at which they were likely to arrive.

137. In the UK, in September 2014, three organisations (NCVYS, the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services, Project Oracle and the Social Research Unit) established the Centre for Youth Impact. With governmental start-up support, its central objective is to "articulate how our work changes the lives of young people and how investment in youth services is of benefit to everyone" (youth-impact.uk).

Quite how the expert group will produce quality frameworks that can be attached to different forms of youth work (for example, youth clubs, street work, youth organisations, youth information) remains to be seen. It will be important to embrace the arguments which have occasionally been mooted that it is the quality of intervention and input that is the critical issue rather than the specificities of outcome: poor youth work is, of course, very likely to produce poor outcomes, whereas good youth work is not likely to produce poor outcomes, even if it may not be clear how and when, or even why and who for, the positive dividends of good youth work may emerge. Hence the idea once advanced by the former Chief Executive of England's National Youth Agency Tom Wylie, that there needed to be a quality local youth work offer to which all young people could have access, embracing a range of quality opportunities and experiences, including participation, information, activities, autonomy, and more. Yet recent evidence from England suggests that even a basic youth work offer has been withdrawn or abandoned by many municipalities: "the youth work 'offer' is diminished and has little currency: for example no council in the south-west [of England] currently publishes a youth offer" (NYA 2014b: 3).

A similar proposition was made in 2000 in Wales, within its then new youth strategy Extending Entitlement (National Assembly for Wales 2000), which argued that all young people should have access to a "package of entitlement"[138] (access to a range of experiences and opportunities), even though many might not require much of it through public services because it would be available to them through more private means.

What is now eagerly anticipated is an overview of testimonies about the experiences of youth work from those who have been through them and are willing to write about them. These are being gathered and collated by the Youth Partnership as I write.[139]

EU Work Plan for Youth

The most recent development, in the summer of 2014, supported by all member states of the European Union with the exception of the United Kingdom (with a reservation concerning the European Semester), is the EU Work Plan for Youth for 2014-2015 (Council of the European Union 2014). Its first principle is "to give impetus and prominence as appropriate to EU level work in the youth field" and its first priority theme is for the "Development of youth work and non-formal and informal learning and its contribution to addressing the effects of the crisis on young people".

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138. This package had 10 elements: education, training and employment; basic skills; opportunities for volunteering and active citizenship; responsive and accessible services; careers advice, guidance and counselling; personal support, advice and information; advice on health and housing; recreational and social opportunities; sporting, artistic, musical and outdoor experiences; the right to consultation and participation. Clearly some of these things are firmly within the orbit of youth work, and some clearly outside it, with the remainder up for discussion about the extent to which youth work might make a contribution.

139. These will be more sophisticated versions of the many stories I myself have told about the practice and effects of youth work in all its different ways (see Williamson 2007).

The EU Work Plan for Youth invites member states and the Commission to establish or maintain[140] expert groups on three specific themes, two of which are explicitly concerned with youth work:

▶ youth work quality systems in member states and the role of common indicators or frameworks;

▶ defining the specific contribution of youth work and non-formal and informal learning to address the challenges young people are facing, in particular the transition from education to employment.

Elsewhere in the paper, there is an invitation to ensure coherence between this work plan and the work plan of the Youth Partnership (in which youth work is prominent, see above), and encouragement for other sectors to "take the youth dimension into account".

Erasmus+: Youth in Action

This paper has been produced in the early days of the new EU programme that incorporates the previous Youth in Action programme within an all-embracing learning and mobility programme called Erasmus+. Those activities targeting the youth field are referred to as "Erasmus+: Youth in Action". They provide opportunities for young people, youth workers and youth policy makers to work and learn together, develop skills, knowledge and competences and thereby become more proactive in building a sustainable and democratic European society.

The Erasmus+: Youth in Action chapter places great store on making use of non-formal learning (youth work) practices to address the many challenges facing young people and youth policy in Europe today. Instruments such as youth exchanges, European Voluntary Service,[141] and Youth Workers' Training and Networking are held to enhance the empowerment and active citizenship of young people in Europe, support the development of their skills and competences (as well as those of youth workers), and to build capacity and professionalism within the youth field. There is particular attention to innovation, quality and partnerships that will produce value-added impact of the work on the youth field on a wider canvas of activity relating to young people, not least to the eight fields of action (see footnote 25) within the European Youth Strategy.

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140. For example, the expert group on youth work quality systems – discussed in the previous section of the paper – was formed prior to the EU Work Plan, but is one likely to be "maintained" under the EU Work Plan.

141. European Voluntary Service (EVS) was established in 1995 as a strand of the EU Teaching and Learning White Paper (European Commission 1995). Voluntary activities were a key pillar of the EU White Paper on Youth in 2001, which was followed shortly afterwards by a resolution on the added value of voluntary activity for young people in the context of the development of Community action on youth (Council of the European Union 2002). See also Williamson et al. (2005).

The Council of Europe and youth worker training

Finally, it is useful to register that beyond the diversity or absence of dedicated programmes of training for youth workers at a national level, the Council of Europe has over 40 years of experience in youth worker training, notably through its programmes at the European Youth Centres in Strasbourg (from 1972) and Budapest (from 1995). It also supports more local projects that often incorporate training (especially in capacity building and project management, as well as more substantive issues) though funding provided by the European Youth Foundation.

Whatever may be happening at national levels, where the story of youth work over the past few years is certainly a more mixed and perhaps less optimistic story, one might surmise from recent developments at a European level that "youth work" is a concept and a practice whose time has come. That it features centrally in a mosaic of documentation, including a current EU Work Plan for Youth and in the current work plan of the Partnership between the European Union and the Council of Europe in the youth field, as well as in the ongoing work of the Council of Europe, supported by new research-based evidence on its value and impact, and an emergent understanding of quality systems through the work of a dedicated expert group, would appear to convey a strong positive resonance and policy commitment. The youth dimension of Erasmus+ (Erasmus+: Youth in Action) reflects these more strategic and policy directions and intentions. Yet doubts and concerns have already been expressed about both the efficacy and efficiency of the Work Plan for Youth and its influence on member states (see, for example, European Youth Forum 2014a). There are deep anxieties that the warm rhetoric at European level is drowning out awareness about the often very tough realities for "youth work" on the ground. On the other hand, there is clearly momentum and some awareness of what "youth work" might do. Now is the time for a "concentrated fusillade"[142] from all actors in the youth field who are committed to strengthening the place and purpose of youth work to build on and develop the opportunities created by that space.

Challenges for the 2nd European Youth Work Convention

At a time of a very mixed portrait of what "youth work" is and does, and how it is evolving in different parts of Europe, it is important to seize the moment when the European institutions concerned with "youth policy" (primarily the European Commission and the Council of Europe[143]) are both proclaiming the imperative to strengthen youth policy and the place of "youth work" within it. The current "state

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142. This was an expression used in the ministerial address at the 1st Ministerial Conference on the Youth Service in the UK in 1989! The Minister contrasted it with a "scatter gun approach". It was not well received. However, the time has perhaps come to recognise that the call was not completely unjustified.

143. Just as the current "youth policy" activity of the European Union is anchored in the European Youth Strategy of 2009, so the "youth policy" work of the Council of Europe is anchored in its Agenda 2020 of 2008 (see Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe 2008). Clearly both have their mandates from the political structures above them, including the Council of the European Union, the European Parliament, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

of play" for youth work in Europe, coupled with its history and evolution that has taken many different forms, would suggest that the 2nd European Youth Work Convention needs to establish whether there are overriding, reasonably consensual ideas throughout Europe. Put simply, this is the complex challenge of finding common ground within the diversity of youth work practice:

1. What is the meaning, the "raison d'être", of "youth work"? What are the underlying concepts and theories that inform our understanding of youth work? Is there a vision for youth work in the future?
2. What are the aims – and anticipated outcomes, effect and impact – of "youth work" at national, European and other transnational levels? Are they the same? If they are different, why, and do they complement each other?
3. What are the various patterns and practices constituting "youth work" that remain consistent with those objectives; in other words, what is the range of activity that may count as youth work, and where are the borders and the boundaries?
4. Where are the connections between "youth work" and wider work with young people (formal education, training and employment; enterprise and entrepreneurship; health; housing; justice; and more); how can and should such connections be made, while maintaining boundaries, through principles and "distinction"?
5. How can youth work secure recognition (beyond the youth field) for both its distinctive and collaborative practice and contribution to the lives of young people and the communities in which they live? How best can self-recognition, political recognition and wider social recognition be linked?
6. What kinds of education and training should be established for the development of professional youth work practice and ensuring quality and standards? Are there minimum requirements that need to be advocated to ensure sufficient professionalism (without the need for professionalisation)?
7. How can political and public authorities be persuaded, beyond the rhetoric and exhortations from within the youth field itself, of the value of "youth work" in order to support its consistent development and delivery?

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Chapter 17

Youth work and an internationally agreed definition of youth work – More than a tough job

Guy Redig[144]

The Holy Grail?

Youth work and international attention

Our society's prime focus is not on youth work. This is probably due to a combination of youth work characteristics that do not sound juicy, shocking, commercial or contradictory enough to attract the attention of politics and the media (or the other way around). It is a waste of time to express one's frustrations about this.

Nevertheless, there are people who specialise in this rather hidden niche of society. In Flanders, Belgium, a small but involved group of field workers, academics, public servants and even politicians broach the subject of youth work at regular intervals. Because they are so few in number they know each other on a first-name basis. However, there is diversity in this intimacy; whenever people gather, a range of views and approaches bubble to the surface.

The international level too, particularly the EU and the Council of Europe, devotes systematic and sustainable attention to youth policy while creating ample room for youth work. For many years now and with growing intensity, youth work has succeeded in capturing the attention of policy makers and an international group of specialist academics. Conferences, training providers and decision makers have offered their opinion on what impact youth work as a European phenomenon could have.

In June 2014, the 5th seminar on the history of youth work and youth policy took place.[145] It was attended not only by a large number of European[146] experts on youth work, but also experts from other sectors.[147] In this chapter, a wealth of information and insights about youth work in a variety of social contexts is provided by an extensive study of a wide range of prior publications (of previous conferences, motions and decisions within the EU and Council of Europe) and, in particular, the documentation of this seminar and the documents issued at its conclusion.[148]

Identification and definition as strategic paradoxes

Despite attempts over many years, it appears intrinsically impossible to settle on an accurate description of youth work as an international phenomenon that distinguishes it from other youth facilities and initiatives.

It is evident that a broad description of youth work allows international reflection on the subject. This seems above all a strategic choice – pushing differences to the margins, underlining similarities – in order to stir the interest of international institutions such as the EU and the Council of Europe. Narrowing the subject area down too soon could push some states to abandon ship if they do not recognise themselves within such rigid parameters.

Simultaneously, an observer cannot but conclude that there exists little consensus on the identification of youth work. That is why the subject is extremely sensitive, the more so in relation to interested forums or sectors. It soon becomes clear that one concept (youth work) covers a very divergent practice, too broad even to use in an international policy context.

Supporters of the current broad but vague approach continue to stress the risks of narrowing it down too soon and are in favour of postponing such a move in order to keep the (somewhat inert) debate live. Opponents of this approach (mostly with no clear definitions to offer) underline the necessity of finding a more rigid European definition for the purpose of positioning youth work as a specific, probably modest, but nevertheless highly significant actor.

This paradox, between a broad but unclear strategic approach on the one hand and a strong but more closed identity on the other, threatens creativity and the progress of debates, and probably also means policy makers pay less attention to the sector.

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145. 5th Seminar on the History of Youth Work and Policy, 8 to 10 June 2014, Espoo, Finland, "Autonomy through dependency. Histories of co-operation, conflict and innovation in youth work". Organised by the Finnish Youth Research Network in co-operation with the youth partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe.
146. From Germany, Norway, Finland, France, Estonia, Poland, Belgium (Flanders) and the UK.
147. From the United States (Missouri), Australia, South Africa.
148. See the five-volume series on the history of youth work in Europe published by the Council of Europe, particularly Volume 5, available at http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/knowledge-books, accessed 22 March 2017.

Striking elements in the international approach

The extensive literature on the definition of youth work in an international context evidently provides a lot more than a paradox. There are some characteristics that are almost unanimously agreed upon as being related to youth work. The following list is not exhaustive:

▶ youth work is that which takes place outside the home situation and the formal learning or work environment (educationalists would use the term "third educational environment"); in terms of leisure, the residual definition can be used (time remaining after compulsory time and personal time). Youth work is clearly developing in this third or leisure-time environment. This position has many consequences. For instance, young people's autonomy of choice is very important to the way they spend their money in this third environment. It has many effects on communication and learning processes, peers are increasingly important, etc.;

▶ youth work is, in principle, open/addressed to all young people, even if it does not reach out to all of them and in quite a number of cases is explicitly addressed to specific groups;

▶ linked to the above-mentioned characteristics is the broad consensus that appears to exist on the interpretation of the nature of learning processes that (may) take place within youth work, that is informal and non-formal. The lack of formality weighs heavily on the impact thereof. Informal learning processes are often different and last longer than processes in formal situations. There is a strong unanimity about the contributions youth work makes to a whole series of competences that can be of great use in many other social relations and are a strong added bonus for young people's curricula vitae (see instrumentalisation, below);

▶ youth work relates controversially to but is not excessively in compliance with the predominant approach of instrumentalisation, for example from a socio-economic logic (employment skills) or rationality;

▶ in literature in particular, youth work practices are always linked to young people's emancipation, an empowering approach and the objective of active participation within an intercultural vision. In so doing, youth work opts for a number of values of commitment without (having the possibility of) translating them, for the time being, into an ideologically sound concept. Youth work would like to recognise young people as interested parties who are fully autonomous.

At the same time, there are also strong uncertainties in relation to some of the following aspects:

▶ the definition of age for youth: although the majority of European countries define "youth" as age 15 to 29, there are uncertainties about upper and lower limits;

▶ several countries refer to "youth" as a comprehensive concept involving young people up to 30 years of age, while expressly intending to include children and teenagers as a target group of youth work;

- ▶ the upper age limit is open to extension, in particular if it is about members (and not youth work leaders), that is covering ages 25 to 35;

- ▶ in the programme Erasmus+: Youth in Action 13 to 30 years is the range defining youth;

- ▶ professionalisation: in the Anglo-Saxon approach, "youth work" is not only limited to young people (>15 years) but also translated into almost completely professionalised working methods. This means guidance by professionals. In other countries (e.g. Flanders, Belgium), 99% of providers of youth work in its local variations[149] are volunteers. Professionals are very limited in number and are only active in one specific type of youth work;

- ▶ the policy scope of youth work: this concerns how youth work relates to welfare policy (assistance to persons) or education policy, now and in the future. Can youth work be explicitly described as a priority for care, healing and treatment or for formal, strictly structured learning processes? Can or do we have to make affirmative choices? Will we agree that youth work outcomes can be measured against welfare and education indicators?;

- ▶ opposing ideological poles: in Anglo-Saxon approaches, the defensive discourse is often predominant; it is about defending young people and promoting self-sufficiency among young people who are not resilient and/ or are harassed by an absolutely hostile environment where dog-eat-dog capitalism reigns. Youth work must act as countervailing power. At the same time, many youth work providers (e.g. in Belgium) adopt an opposing, "offensive" approach where pleasure, play and constructive involvement are the focus. Other countries do not take clear or strong positions.

A literature review of EU and Council of Europe sources suggests a clear Anglo-Saxon hegemony, while other countries, such as those in the Mediterranean, are conspicuous by their absence. Other strong views, advocated for example in Flanders, Belgium, and Germany and Finland get less attention or disappear into nuances. This over-emphasis can partly be explained by the comfort of speaking one's mother tongue, making it harder for non-English speakers to express themselves both in debates and in written sources in English. It might also be that the Anglo-Saxon hegemony fits the "zeitgeist", not only in the youth field, and is part of a general cultural hegemony (see Gramsci).[150] On the other hand, a number of countries are very willing to admit that they do not have a clear definition of youth work.

How to move forward?

Currently, a number of essential questions may be posed.

Does youth work remain a vague but interesting concept as a work in (slow) progress, a search for the Holy Grail, or can we agree on a tighter identity? Will strategic

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149. In the Flemish Community of Belgium (6.1 million inhabitants), approximately 5 000 local private youth work initiatives are in place. Mere hundreds employ professionals. In addition, youth work exists that is organised by local authorities but is also run by volunteers.

150. Antonio Gramsci: Prison Letters (Letters del Carcere), set of prison note books first published in 1948.

considerations pose a major hindrance to this, and can we at the same time cherish an artistic blurring of the lines in order to continue the good work? Does one dare to make choices and tackle the lack of clarity (age, professionalisation, choice between defensive and offensive, etc.)?[151] Does one want to work on a more distinctive ideological profile, without having to couch it in classical political terms? Whatever choices are made, one should adopt an appropriate method to avoid compromising the current dynamic.

The ideology, stupid![152]

Inevitable discussion

Previous analysis indicates that youth work can never be approached as a value-free notion. In almost all descriptions, normative choices are preponderant or sneak in. Every definition of identity is influenced by moral, ethical, social, cultural or political values. This is certainly true for those concepts about which a reasonable consensus has already been reached; it is true in a superior way for the uncertainties and alternatives that are still open.

These problems of identification can probably be explained in part by youth work's hesitation to adopt an overly narrow ideological attitude. However, this is not true for the large majority of Anglo-Saxon practitioners and researchers who emphasise without any reticence their social position as a countervailing power, and have been doing so for many decades now.[153] On the other hand, Howard Williamson responds: [154]

> certainly even the most modest youth work training, taken on by most, starts by emphasising young people as a "resource to be managed, not a problem to be solved". The focus is firmly on young people (their hopes, needs, wants, role, circumstances) rather than the state. For "professionalised" youth workers, their training does often paralyse their capacity to work with the "agents of the state" – police, social workers, teachers, training providers.

However, the inevitability of this ideological debate should not paralyse. On the contrary, it must stimulate and openly and clearly express the consequences, if any, of certain choices. Present-day youth scientists such as Sieckelinck (2009) stress

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151. There is always a danger in using dichotomies, because they seem to offer just two extreme choices. In this context the extreme choices are used as a tool for youth work, to position it in a continuum, between extremes.

152. A variant of the well-known expression "The economy, stupid", coined by Bill Clinton's campaign manager James Carville.

153. Since 1980, I have been active as a professional in youth work and youth policy at international level as well. At a Finnish seminar in 2014, I heard almost word-for-word this leitmotif expressed by, among others, English, Welsh and Scottish youth workers and academics in decades past. It is no coincidence that authoritative English youth scientists in the 1980s (the Birmingham School, which was close to the Frankfurt School) positioned themselves as Marxists and were supportive of the Labour Party (during the daunting times of the arch-conservative Margaret Thatcher), "questioning the valorised division between 'producers' and 'consumers' that was evident in cultural theory, such as that of Theodor Adorno and the Frankfurt School" (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Centre_for_Contemporary_Cultural_Studies, accessed 22 March 2017).

154. In mail correspondence concerning this article, 2016.

the need for placing a strong emphasis on ideological aspects in each approach to young people.

Managing the discussion?

Still more important than a clear-cut definition of youth work across Europe is the discussion that precedes it. That is why this contribution unhesitatingly chooses to put each definition into perspective, because nothing is as indefinite as a definition (this is quite a paradox!).

This does not mean that adopting a strategy of denial and steering clear of definitions offers the greatest opportunities. In concrete terms, this chapter argues in favour of promoting and encouraging an active process of definition and of arriving at a common ground.

That is why a workable method must be developed, the path to be followed (*meta hódos*) must be indicated, taking into account the various strategic aspects (see above) so as to manage the discussion as far as possible. This contribution explicitly chooses not to narrow the scope of discussion to the elimination of deviations, if any, or to suppress rebelliousness. On the contrary. The creation of a reference framework will (probably/hopefully) bring more clarity by allowing one to place the various approaches while being respectful of them.

Entanglement or disentanglement of involvement

A trio of actors

Upon analysis of the international literature on youth work and youth work policy, even in the broader context of youth policy, it is striking how the views of very differing actors or actor groups are frequently mixed up or considered as if they are generally accepted. However, it cannot be denied that youth work always involves at least three interested parties. It is of importance to explain the concept of "interested party". This is often reduced to the English term stakeholder (or "Stake Holder"),[155] which refers to external parties having a stake in a concern. In addition, the interested party must be considered a "share holder",[156] more specifically the co-proprietor of a common possession.

In youth work (policy), as in many other social phenomena, three (or four) groups of shareholders or co-proprietors can be distinguished:

▶ youth – in this case young people – who are happy to make choices about what they are going to do, especially in their leisure time, using a hierarchy of values;

155. The etymology of "stake" goes back to, among other things, the Dutch word "staak", a wooden post driven into the ground to mark a boundary. It involves people who are near, their interest stemming from their vicinity.

156. The etymology of "share" goes back to the possession of part of the land, thus very clearly meaning "co-propriety", which envisions a dimension that is very different from that evoked by "stakeholder".

▶ youth work – as the whole of a variety of initiatives – that presents itself to young people with a certain provision that, as it is called youth work, it differs from a number of other provisions;

▶ the authorities – a layered system of public steering (at local, regional, national, EU level) – that implement policies aiming at youth on the one hand and youth work on the other (thus youth work policy);

▶ possibly and certainly increasingly, academics who can also provide different angles via a singular (supposedly scientific) approach.

This is illustrated in Figure 5.

Figure 5: Youth work within three or four actor groups
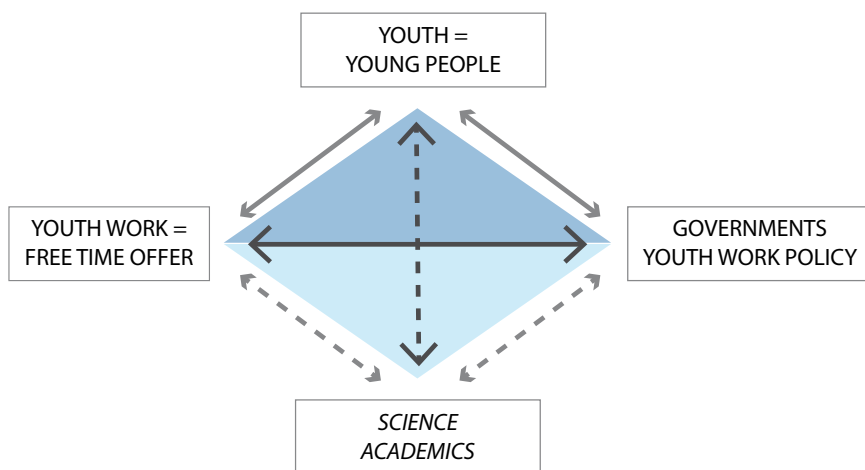
Each of these three (or four) actors operates on the basis of its own choices about values and standards, which make up an ideology. These choices are not easily comparable, and are very dissimilar and thus fundamentally different. This chapter supports the principle that this three (or four)fold division is of essential importance to approach the debate on the advisability of a clear-cut identity for youth work.

In this context, it must be clear that each actor group is entitled to make its own ideological choices and can develop definitions of its own. However, they will meet one another and engage in very interesting discussions.

Young people as actors

There is a general consensus in youth work to treat the autonomy of young people with the utmost respect. This is evidently due to a very active and intensive interpretation of the concept of participation, which is understood much more in terms of "share holding" than "stake holding", the first aiming at co-proprietorship. This implies that youth work tries to achieve maximum autonomy for its target group. Here, an approach focusing on empowerment is needed. It may be expected that

youth work will actively and maximally involve young people in developing specific methods and sustainable ways of internal decision making.

Do young people already have a broad ideology or are they supportive of one? The answer is not definite and cannot be described at length. Nevertheless, there are some indications of predominant trends among young people and, to an increasing extent, children, that are important in this context. The decisive importance of peers within a given organisation with regard to the choices in young people's lives has grown significantly. It may be argued with caution that in past decades influence has shifted in direction, from vertical (older v. younger people) to horizontal (peers). Moreover, the impact of a more informal socialisation environment (e.g. youth work) also seems bigger than the impact of formal environments (e.g. school, formal training). Provisions that strongly respect the autonomy of young people are more widely applauded than a strictly managed top-down approach. Although these educational analyses advise caution, they stress the great significance of a provision such as youth work, the more so because it responds positively to a number of important sensitivities.

On the other hand, youth work does not stand alone in this. It must take account in particular of little-institutionalised forms of youth organisations and informal groups developing out of the blue or other leisure-time activities in the sectors of sports and culture.

Despite the need and demand for autonomy, parents sometimes have a strong impact on their children's choices of leisure activities. Here, there is probably a tendency towards choosing a provision in which safety, manageability and maximum protection against "bad" influences are guaranteed. This tendency is not quite to the advantage of youth work as its approach promotes greater autonomy of young people and is supportive of a rather less authoritarian management culture. Especially when youth work is led, or guided – in conformity with objectives – by young people, the guarantees parents seem to ask for seem less restrictive. Such restrictions may pose a concrete threat to an explicit youth work culture.

Youth work as a provider

Youth work can be generally described as a provision of civil society, situated in the social profit sector.[157] It concerns groups of citizens who organise themselves around their own private social project. With regard to youth work, this project focuses on young people, thus on a categorical[158] approach that develops itself in what can be described as leisure time.

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157. Social profit (civil society organisations) as an actor group co-exists with public profit (i.e. authorities/governments) and private profit (i.e. enterprise). These three actor groups (and their hybrid forms) are players for the market of citizens and families. The added value and profits of the social profit sectors are put back entirely into the social project and under no circumstance are awarded to shareholders or proprietors.

158. "Categorical" means an approach aimed at a group of people sharing a characteristic: in this case, their young age. That is why youth work is a categorical provision par excellence, in contrast to most sports and cultural associations that are organised in a sectoral way and for which the categorical choice is of secondary importance. A "territorial" approach is a third way of structuring a policy.

Within these essential elements (civil society, categorical approach, leisure time), each youth work initiative can make a number of choices. These are based on the target group's views, the values that are central and that will be transferred via the method chosen by the organisation. By definition, youth work is value-rich and can never be value-free. The extent to which these values are made more explicit may vary strongly. In some initiatives, based on strongly held spiritual convictions or politics, they will be extremely visible. Other initiatives will place no emphasis here, but this aspect may be part of the approach. In fact, it goes without saying that the absence of strict normativity is also a strong normative choice. *Mutatis mutandis*, this applies to youth work supervision, whether mainly led by professionals or volunteers. In past decades, a large number of youth work initiatives have set themselves free from the original ideological systems they adhered to (e.g. religion, political party or movement) and now operate with greater independence to determine their values. In many cases, it will be up to the youth workers to determine the ideological and normative directions of the provision. This also explains why the Anglo-Saxon model clearly dominates the socially critical approach in professional youth work. In some other youth work concepts – par excellence in Flanders, Belgium – young people (<25 years) involved in voluntary work take a lot of responsibility and are very account-able and committed. As to ideology, these young volunteers cannot be subsumed under the same heading. However, it is striking that most of them are middle class and evidently live their involvement on the basis of this framework of values. At the same time, they adhere to already existing initiatives in which ideological roots and beliefs continue to be present.

In any case, the impact of supervisors on youth work is highly decisive. It is important to note that a concept in which young people take great responsibility is closely related to a concept in which the target group has opted for autonomy. Autonomy is a key value in the Flemish approach. In conclusion, youth work as an actor group will have the highest impact on coming up with a European definition. Does not autonomy literally mean "making one's own laws"?

All this heavy "education" stuff cannot deny one of the most important but often forgotten values of youth work, across the world: giving young people opportunities to enjoy and to play. Youth work is often a sanctuary wherein young people find and construct "free spaces" to be (happily) young together, to explore each other, to tinker with subcultural elements, and to become who they want to become.

Authorities/governments

In recent decades, the authorities (governments from local to supranational level) have increasingly intervened in youth work. Conducting a youth work policy means that the government expresses itself about what youth work means (definitions) and in which way measures for youth work are undertaken. These measures are nearly always focused on a combination of recognition, and as a result, political and administrative legitimation and the associated financial (grants) and material support.

Each government policy must give account to legislative power (from municipal councils to the European Parliament) and to the citizen in general. For this reason, the authorities must prove that the measures taken and the support provided were meant to achieve the intended effects. This inevitably turns into a discourse about

usefulness and pertinence. Usefulness can be ensured in many ways and instrumental predominance is a threat here. In this context, it may be expected that dynamic and democratic authorities develop this policy by engaging in intensive and open communication and dialogue with, among others, youth work and directly with young people in general, too. Active and participatory policy making can lead to a high degree of consensus about, among other things, the definitions and objectives of youth work. The more this participation succeeds, the greater unanimity of opinion will be achieved, and vice versa. Of course this evolution is not just positive. Government can give and take: it can create a hopeful setting one moment and a few years later destroy all previous successes. It is not uncommon for government to try and co-opt youth work by seducing it (e.g. with grants) into pure economy-conscious schemes, with no basic respect for young people.

As is the case for most other policy areas, the more clearly defined youth work is by the government, the clearer the policy objectives will be. And vice versa.

Social scientists and researchers

Scientists may act as a fourth party. Youth work scientists are scarce; within the broader context of youth sciences (e.g. pedagogy, psychology, sociology, welfare work, political science), youth work is rarely focused on. Nevertheless, the Pool of European Youth Researchers (PEYR) network that is active in the EU and the Council of Europe (through the youth partnership) and boasts a tradition of exchange, development of theories, and so on may and must play a role in this. This role may be played for instance by:

▶ making an abstraction of the practices in many countries and systematically describing and assessing them against one another;

▶ systematising this, inciting the other actors, especially the authorities and youth work, to debate and take positions;

▶ explaining uncertainties, agreements and disagreements, by co-directing and supervising the debate;

▶ developing descriptions and definitions[159] (a common language) that are also adopted by other discussion groups and used by, for example, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP);

▶ systematising findings from the history of youth work and youth policy in Europe and further contextualising them to the present day.[160]

Simultaneously, scientists may wholeheartedly express their own normative considerations from their own points of view and convictions. In doing so, they contribute to a more ideological approach and to explaining youth work concepts.

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159. Update of the existing glossary in the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy – EKCYP.
160. The proposal made at the recent meeting of the Friends of European Youth Policy could be mentioned here in the context of creating a European centre for youth work development.

Quo vadis?

Making a choice

Earlier, this text opted for a more explicit focus on defining youth work in a European context. A strong plea was made to put the main emphasis (temporarily) on the process of discussion and exchange of views and norms rather than on results.

That is why there is a need for making an inventory of agreements and disagreements and, in particular, for recording the normative arguments that are behind them. The above-mentioned points include a first and probably incomplete list of the most important aspects.

It seems important to make clear choices and develop a strategy to do so.

Strategy and method

A well-considered approach is necessary to conduct this discussion in a successful way.

This approach should have the four actor groups (young people, youth work, authorities, science) play a role in the debate as they reflect different starting points and should be confronted with one another. It would be very naive to suppose that each actor group would speak in unanimity – probably quite the contrary. But thanks to those three (or four) perspectives, other ways of reasoning and different logics will be highlighted. Should we not seize the opportunity and try to respond to this challenge by initiating, especially within these actor groups, a debate – on the basis of a shared position – and by spending time on basic exercises about aspects of consensus and dissent?

Hopefully this text provides insights, impulses and stimuli. Evidently, this also has an ideological basis.

Fac et spera.

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Chapter 18

What are the meanings and the underlying concepts and theories of youth work?

Lasse Siurala

Towards a shared understanding of the meaning of youth work

Youth work is normally carried out by public or third sector organisations through voluntary or paid youth workers, typically in face-to-face contact with young people. Thus the three key actors defining the meaning of youth work are: the organisation, the youth worker and the young person. From the viewpoint of the organisation responsible for youth work (e.g. the youth ministry, local government youth service, youth organisation, adult organisation working with young people, charitable or faith-based organisation, or foundation) the success of youth work is gauged by how well the organisation and its workers meet the aims and objectives set out for them. For example, youth work provided by the Department of Youth of the City of Helsinki is meaningful to the extent it meets the priorities, objectives and other expectations of the City Council. Another viewpoint is that of the youth workers: how do they, as trained practitioners, define the meaning of youth work? What is their perception of the role, the aims and the essential practices of a youth worker? There is a myriad of definitions and claims from the point of view of the youth workers, ranging from ethical reflections (Sercombe 2010), studies (Belton 2014), practitioner statements (e.g. Declarations of the 1st and 2nd European Youth Work Conventions) to campaign-type interventions in political debates on youth work (e.g. In Defence of Youth Work in the UK).[161] Typically, youth workers see themselves as supporters and proponents of young people, and youth at risk in particular. Individual, face-to-face processes are at the heart of this work. The meaning of youth work is thus measured against the success of these processes. Youth work is meaningful if the young people in question start to manage their own problems, become motivated to study or work, find friends, learn social skills or experience other "significant changes" in their lives. The third angle to the raison d'être of youth work is the young people

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161. See www.indefenceofyouthwork.com, accessed 23 March 2017.

themselves: how well does the offer of youth services (from municipal authorities and NGOs) meet the needs and expectations of young people? Representative studies of young people in cities have shown that many respondents do not know about local youth work, many say that they are not interested in such activities, while some (normally between 5% and 20%) report that they actively participate in them. As an example, a common critique to open youth work (e.g. through youth centres) is that they should be more cognisant of and responsive to the needs of those not visiting youth centres. The yardstick for the meaning of youth work is the responsiveness of the youth work offer (locally, nationally and internationally) to the needs and expectations of young people in general.

In the literature of youth work, there is an overwhelming focus on the second angle in defining the meaning of youth work. The ones making the definitions are often youth workers looking at the key elements of the encounter and relationship between a youth worker and young people. This angle is very important, but is not the only one. Sometimes youth work is conspicuously complacent (ignorant) of the other angles and the controversies among them. Youth work practice is not always linked to the organisational aims or the interests of young people outside youth centres and youth programmes. The three angles do not communicate very well. When the government, the City Council or NGO objectives of youth work do not cascade down, it is often a result of a lack of dialogue or simply bad management. A successful organisation negotiates, modifies or even changes its objectives in co-operation with its staff and youth workers.

The other communication gap, that between youth workers and young people in general, requires increased curiosity of the youth workers about those young people who do not participate in youth programmes, do not come to youth centres or do not join a youth NGO. Youth worker training should provide competences to undertake study, read youth research, find related knowledge from other sectors, outreach to schools and shopping centres, and eventually to draft strategies for more inclusive youth work. The managers of youth services should encourage youth workers in these explorations. The overall objective is a better shared understanding of the meaning of youth work among organisations, youth workers and young people.

Hidden assumptions, populism and political legitimation replacing theoretical anchoring in defining the meaning of youth work?

Howard Williamson (2015) notes that one problem in reaching common ground in an understanding of youth work is that it is "far too often quite devoid of theoretical foundations". The variety and diversity of youth work practices have instead created a myriad of definitions. Those aiming at common ground have tended towards the lengthy, complex and abstract. We are left with a "glorious messiness" (Walker 2016).

Interestingly, as such the youth field is not devoid of theoretical foundations. There is "new education" (educationalists like Freire; Freinet; Neil and Montessori), "Deweyan pragmatism", "constructivism" (Glaserfeld), "postformal education" (Steinberg), "progressive learning" (like Schön and Garvin) and "social pedagogy" (Úcar 2013). It is rather that for some reason youth work and youth worker training has become

more "methodological" than "theoretical" (Lorentz 2009). Brooker has noted that in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the US and the UK a concern of youth work degree graduates is "the disconnection between what they have learned in the classroom with the duties they are required to perform once they gain employment" (2014: 136). Youth worker training has been – according to the graduates – too "knowledge-based" and not "work-based" enough. Furthermore, theoretical approaches to education cannot be value free and often have a political dimension. As youth worker training institutions are dependent on public funds and as they want to keep the education offer open to all, it might not be in their interest to commit themselves too strongly to one pedagogical approach, which might be associated with an identifiable political background. Public youth work organisations and youth NGOs may face the same problem.

However, one result of this "glorious messiness" and lack of theoretical anchoring is that the field is left open to hidden assumptions, political legitimation and even populism to take over the definition of youth work.

Youth work is often conceptualised as "institution free" (Fusco 2014) and the task of youth workers is even seen as "[waging] guerrilla warfare against institutions" (Belton 2014). This conceptualisation might be a response to conspicuously oppressive government policies that are ignorant of or even hostile to youth work. Under other circumstances, however, youth work and youth workers may be understood as emphasising dialogue and collaboration with institutions. The roots of the different concepts of youth work (i.e. their hidden assumptions) need to be uncovered and assessed, otherwise we do not know how well they are transferable to different cultural contexts. For example, research and debates on youth work and youth policy in the UK are not directly applicable for many other countries, where youth work conditions and cultures are quite different.

Second, during times of austerity youth work – on the lookout for resources and recognition – sometimes tries to legitimate itself within current political rhetoric and government policies. It may easily end up focusing on integrating young people into labour markets and reducing early school leaving and truancy and the like. Youth work can obtain more funds and even do a good job in this regard, but one must also ask how the new (politically legitimate) priorities may be changing youth work. Is it easier to sacrifice the core pedagogical principles of youth work, when youth workers have not internalised the (theoretical) educational foundations of youth work?

Third, there is populism. Populism as a political movement that assumes that there exists something called the "general will" of citizens; that this represents the "true knowledge" of things; and that there is a "gap" between people and the government. There is a similarity to this kind of argumentation in youth work that, first, maintains that there are essential collective interests of "young people" ("youth as a social class", "the digital generation", "the excluded age group") that establish the "general will" of young people. Second, there is the rhetoric that young people know how things are, that "there are no better experts on young people than young people themselves" (the youth NGO credo) and that they are the owners of "true knowledge". Third, there is the constant claim within the youth field that "society does not listen to young

people": the "gap". To the extent that there are elements of populism in the definitions of youth work, they also need to be reflected on and deciphered (see Siurala 2015).

The Scylla and Charybdis of concrete and open definitions

Williamson (2015) has warned us that it is "somewhat perilous" for youth work to accept its eclecticism, diversity and variance. We cannot meaningfully and consistently communicate the meaning of youth work if all definitions and conceptualisations are considered acceptable. But there are also those who argue that simple, clear-cut and concrete definitions of youth work render the field inflexible and rigid, unable to react to unexpected challenges. Thus we have to choose between two dangers: eclectic openness and concrete inflexibility. Youth legislation typically faces these dangers: should one define concretely what methods constitute youth work and which competences are needed for a professional youth worker, or should the legislation define youth work through objectives and approaches and restrain from listing youth worker skills and competences? A recent debate in Finland concerned whether "youth councils" should be mentioned in legislation as those tasked with promoting youth participation at a local level. Some argued it constituted a breakthrough in local youth participation in forcing municipalities to set up youth councils. Others argued that concretising youth participation via youth councils solidified a structure that is increasingly criticised, at the same time hindering the development of alternative forms of youth participation. Similarly, youth worker trade unions and, often, training institutions lobby legislators to have the competences of a professional youth worker specified in a youth act. On the other hand others argue that "the more we prescribe the requirements for a youth worker and require pre-service credentials, the more we restrict entry into the field and the more we distance ourselves from volunteers, partners and young people" (Walker 2016).

Williamson (2015) may be trying to escape both Scylla and Charybdis by suggesting that we should have "a simple but generic definition of youth work". Indeed, why not: "[support] youth agency through a range of diverse participatory and experiential practices, helping young people acquire the capacities and competencies for autonomous, active and responsible decision-making about their lives and engagement with their society"?

Historical roots of the ambiguity of youth work

This ambiguity in youth work can also be traced back to the history of youth work.[162] Youth work has been constructed over time between two apparently opposing interests of emancipation and control. Youth work was about young people, their autonomy, aspirations, problems and living conditions, but it also operated in a given society with its own problem and integration-oriented expectations for youth work. Societies have exerted their influence on youth through youth work (control), but also allowed youth work to support the interests and ideas of young

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162. See the five-volume series on the history of youth work in Europe published by the Council of Europe, particularly Volume 5, available at http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/knowledge-books, accessed 22 March 2017.

people (emancipation). Due to these conflicting pressures, youth work was unable to establish a clear and autonomous space for itself and experienced an identity crisis.

As, historically, youth work has been more about social integration than about youth changing society, youth work became instrumentalised, pedagogised and formalised. In a number of direct and indirect ways, pedagogical youth work interventions became instruments of society so young people were efficiently socialised to the established order.

At the same time, youth work was defined by increased professionalism and methodisation. Youth work specialised in a range of methods taught in formal vocational and higher education institutions, and became a formalised profession. This led to the elimination of the political and pedagogical aspects of youth work in some regions (Lorenz 2009). Emphasising expertise and specialised knowledge leads to understanding youth work as a methodological or technical practice. This is in contrast to those who understand youth work as an ethical practice.

The contradictory expectations of emancipation and integration led the history conferences[163] to see youth work as "an oxymoronic practice" or "youth work as an oxymoronic blend". Youth work can only be understood as a practice that desperately tries to find the right blend between working with youth and for society. From a broad historical perspective, after the Second World War, the task of youth work was to integrate young people into the existing social order ("youth work as a transit zone"). After 1968, the youth phase was seen as valuable for the independent growth of young people ("a social forum", "youth as an actor of change"). After the recessions of the 1990s in Europe, all this changed. The task became rather "to monitor, predict and control the individual development of young people" (Coussée, Williamson and Verschelden 2012: 319).

A significant number of historical and contemporary studies give the overall impression that youth work has tended to take on the role of integration and that it has been increasingly difficult to maintain autonomy or promote the emancipation of youth. In fact, emancipation increasingly appears to take place outside youth work, in the streets (e.g. the Occupy movement), on the internet (social media), in the arts and popular culture (e.g. artivism, graffiti, rap) and through everyday actions, campaigns and the lifestyle choices of young people.

History tells us that youth work must keep on reflecting the conflicting pressures from youth and society and keep on finding innovative solutions to retain its recognition and autonomy.

Defining youth work through future challenges and work with others

The meaning of youth work should not only be understood through its history, through present theories and practices, but also through the demands of the future.

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163. A series of workshops and conferences explored the history of youth work. The first and second took place in Blankenberge, Belgium (2008, 2009); the third took place in Ghent, Belgium (2010) and the fourth in Tallinn, Estonia (2011).

The Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention recommends that "Youth work has to find strategies to work on the current and emerging challenges faced by young people".

To have an idea what the "emerging challenges" are we may consult the prominent social philosopher William Connolly (2011, 2013). In sum, he argues that both nature and society are characterised by complexity, plurality and uncertainty. Even if markets, politics, government, religions and even the sciences promise that life and society are governable and are converging to a better world, we should, according to Connolly, question that and stop for critical reflection. We should find ways of breaking conventions, using critical practical wisdom, and engaging in role experimentation and alternative lifestyles that can spark off a societal reflection process – to see the multi-tiered, complex and unpredictable nature of "the human cosmos" (Connolly 2013: 41).

One can believe or not believe in social philosophers, but uncertain and unpredictable times challenge youth work in several ways. We need to find ways of preparing young people to positively and innovatively handle controversies and unexpected situations, preparing them to redraft their future trajectories. Our increasingly pluralised world asks for intercultural skills, empathy and tolerance (not least to address the widespread reluctance in Europe to cater to refugees from Syria, Afghanistan and North Africa since 2014). Young people should be encouraged and allowed to generate their ideas through versatile action. In relation to public services and politics youth need to develop negotiation skills and strategies, at the same time as youth work (i.e. service) has to promote these skills in their respective public administrations.

During these times of uncertainty and austerity youth work cannot turn inward, but should link with others and build alliances through which it can make its unique competences visible and recognised. After all, most youth concerns require collective impact and youth work – with its specific competences – is likely to make a difference. In support, the 2nd European Youth Work Convention recommends that cross-sectoral co-operation is one of key areas where youth work has to take action. Paradoxically, youth work needs to become dependent on others to create independent space: "Autonomy through dependency", as the fifth history of youth work produced by the Council of Europe is titled (Siurala et al. 2016).

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Chapter 19

What are the aims and anticipated outcomes of "youth work" at national, European and other transnational levels?

Valentina Cuzzocrea

The label "youth work" represents an incredible variety, as emphasised by Howard Williamson (2015) in the background paper of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention. The declaration from the 1st European Youth Work Convention in 2010 was meant precisely to celebrate such a diversity, which remains uncontested: "something called 'youth work' has done very different things, at different times, in different contexts". In this chapter, I address the more specific issue of how the aims of youth work are shaped and reshaped in the interaction of different actors/parties involved in putting it into practice, at the national, European and other transnational levels, reflecting on the common ground of these activities, and posing several questions for further work in the field.

In the Council of the European Union resolution of 2010 on youth work, member states were explicitly invited, *inter alia*, to:

> Promote different kinds of sustainable support for youth work.
>
> …
>
> Support and develop the role of youth work in implementing the renewed framework, especially the contribution of youth work to the objectives in the different action fields.[164]
>
> Involve, where appropriate, local and regional authorities and actors to play an important role in developing, supporting and implementing youth work.
>
> …
>
> Enhance synergies and complementarity between initiatives of the European Union, the Council of Europe and other actors on local, regional, national and European level.

It is therefore incontestably recognised that actors in charge of redefining youth work are to be found at different levels, and that efforts are elicited to link these levels.

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164. These are: education and training, employment and entrepreneurship, health and well-being, participation, voluntary activities, social inclusion, youth and the world, creativity and culture.

If we reflect on the diversity of youth involved in youth work, for instance, without calling for national or supranational actors, we will notice that over the years the potential of youth work has referred particularly to youth at risk of economic, social and cultural disengagement.

Youth work has been considered – especially in such conditions – an instrument for the empowerment of the individual, a means able to make a difference. However, such a focus immediately excludes other groups of young people who may benefit from the learning experience of being engaged in youth work in the first place. In this sense, the reference group for youth work should remain open. So, for instance, it is useful to reflect on the possible diversity of potential groups of young people involved, and the variety within those groups. I will consider here four different groups: migrants, middle-class youth, vulnerable groups, and gender-related groups of young people.

Young migrants

Migrants could be young people who travelled alone to pursue further education, higher level qualifications or work experience they could not get in their own countries, who initially thought of moving for a specific period but then decided not to return home. What type of youth work might be appealing to those for whom travelling is an individual life decision and who do not know what destination will come next, depending on the opportunities available to them? Can youth work engage these young people with recipient societies? How voluntary are these activities? And how might these young people find out about the possibilities to become engaged in something useful?

Young migrants may also be sons/daughters within larger migrant family groups. In this case the level of formal education may vary significantly. What unites these young people – who are both similar and very different – when engaged in youth work? How can we make youth work desegregate those young people who are more at risk of segregation because they have escaped from conditions of poor integration? Is youth work capable of opening up communities that would otherwise remain aloof, thus becoming a pathway to possible integration?

Middle-class youth

There is an assumption that middle-class youth are already engaged with society and are less at risk, and that the mere fact of being in education (which in this case is likely to last until higher education) makes them more likely to be on socially accepted "right tracks".

Even if it is true that class is positively correlated with education, and that education is an indicator of societal engagement, it would be unfair not to recognise that middle-class youth are far from being perfectly employable, or perfect users of the informal mechanisms that are necessary to make public roles liveable (not only employment, but also participation, etc.). Especially in countries where youth unemployment is dramatically high, like in southern Europe, work experience that

may help young people to acquire transferable skills even if they are not the jobs that the students aspire to keep (the so-called student jobs), can easily become long-term traps for other groups of workers. This means that middle-class youth, often in education, will miss the opportunity to develop those skills that formal education alone cannot offer, and will lack the means to face conditions of underemployment, often overlooked in youth studies literature (as emphasised by MacDonald 2011). Literacy, a good background, and possible financial backing do not preclude young people getting into situations of financial and emotional hardship, as in the case of university students (Antonucci 2013). Youth work can be especially relevant here in its function as a booster of employability (SALTO-YOUTH 2014). In other words, as a central learning occasion (although not formal), youth work may also benefit relatively privileged young people, aside from those from less privileged positions on whom more attention has been often devoted (understandably) so far. What is the common value of youth work in such cases? What forms of youth work, in practice, take place?

Vulnerable groups

That youth work can benefit young people in vulnerable conditions seems obvious, especially because it can effectively intervene in and make up for the deficiencies of formal education; it can be an effective inclusive instrument in cases of youth at risk of drop-out, for instance. But if we think of the many, differently vulnerable groups of young people, what perhaps needs more emphasis is the social value of youth work for society, the transformative potential of this range of activities for the societal contexts in which young people live their everyday lives, and the overall impact they can make on others, and not only for themselves. This in turn connects, for them, to the aim of "broadening young people's lifeworlds" put forward by Coussée (2012: 84). One way to discuss common ground for young people from vulnerable backgrounds and be engaged in youth work is to liberate ourselves from the notion that youth work is a way to prevent young people from creating discord, and rather to focus on the positive outcomes of their activities. A leading question is here how different that kind of youth work is from youth work put in place by, for and with "more privileged" youth.

Gender-related groups

While engagement of vulnerable youth in youth work activities may foster, in particular, the possibility for broadening young people's lifeworlds, when it comes to gender-related groups engaged in youth work we may want to put emphasis on "connecting young people's lifeworlds" (Coussée 2012: 84). In a recent report, it was stated that gender-conscious youth work:

> proactively challenges societal issues related to gender, such as inequality and changing male/female roles. It involves interventions and programmes that directly challenge social norms about how young women and young men should live their lives. It can take place with young men and young women in either single sex or mixed sex groups as long as there is a gender specific focus. (McArdle et al. 2012: 2)

The awareness that activities are often based on gender stereotypes, and that these constrain life choices, is an important starting point to combat structural inequalities. We should reflect on what the value of such an awareness is, and what its implications for youth work are.

Yet, thinking only about how diverse the groups of young people engaged in youth work can be is a stark simplification. The picture becomes much more complex when we include other levels at which youth policy is conceived and implemented. A call for composite, multi-level participation is recognised in the above-mentioned resolution, which states that:

> Youth work is organised and delivered in different ways (by youth-led organisations, organisations for youth, informal groups or through youth services and public authorities) and is given shape at local, regional, national and European level, dependent e.g. of the following elements:
>
> - the community, historical, social and policy contexts where youth work takes place,
>
> - the aim of including and empowering all children and young people, especially those with fewer opportunities,
>
> - the involvement of youth workers and youth leaders,
>
> - the organisations, services or providers, whether they are governmental or nongovernmental, youth-led or not,
>
> - the approach or method used taking into account the needs of young people.
>
> In many Member States local and regional authorities also play a key role in supporting and developing local and regional youth work.

This poses the crucial question of how the work of these different actors can come together – and in conjunction with all eight fields of action! – to fulfil the aims associated with youth work. Will the original aims get lost in the process? Can competing interests ever come into play? What might these be? In what conditions do they tend to intervene?

It is important to identify what characteristics of youth work make these activities useful and purposeful not only for all youth engaged, but more broadly for all parties called on to be engaged too. Coussée (2012: 84) has suggested that "[a] common feature of all these practices is the use of methods of non-formal education (educational activities outside the formal education system) and the emphasis on voluntary participation", and that in matters of youth work there is agreement on a "set of values and methods" around Europe, which are:

- voluntary participation of young people;

- listening to the voice of young people;

- bringing young people together;

- connecting to young people's lifeworld;

- broadening young people's lifeworld.

(2012: 86)

These last definitions, which I have already recalled in this short contribution, may help make more visible the dimensions through which the broadest aim of youth work, that is to provide opportunities of integration and inclusion for young people, take shape.

Therefore, there is scope for discussing Coussée's identified commonalities in the set of values and methods of youth work, and examine whether they can be said to be "verified" at the different levels (national, transnational) and in terms of the different groups and parties engaged, at different levels, in youth work. Apart from the variety of identified groups of youth, other levels that are worthy of attention in terms of their hierarchies are: young people and youth workers, youth workers, policy makers, community, society; those exposed to the immediate impact and outcomes of youth work at different levels; and those in charge of elaborating the purposes of youth work. More generally, and perhaps more importantly, a key reflection on this theme could be to see whether we can go beyond Coussée's statements and explore if:

▶ other commonalities can be envisaged and added to his original list, especially concerning aims;

▶ any of the points identified can be reformulated and readjusted in a way that makes them more powerful, or more useful, or more apt for effective policy making in the field;

▶ what risks, if any (e.g. lack of authenticity and effectiveness, manipulation, and unhelpful jargon) are entailed in such broad and multi-level collaborations, and how these may affect proposed aims.

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Chapter 20

A critical approach to youth work categorisations

Marko Kovacic

Introduction

Operating with terms, concepts and methods within the realm of the social sciences, defining boundaries to distinguish one field from another, is always challenging. The situation is no different in policy or any other area that is governed, at its core, by eclecticism. Youth work, as a community support practice that encompasses a wide range of activities of a social, cultural, educational or political nature both by, with and for young people, is certainly no exception to that rule. In fact, most of the current academic literature on youth work focuses on "the seemingly amorphous and notoriously transient boundaries differentiating youth workers from other people who work with young people, rather than [on] core attributes of contemporary youth work practice" (AYAC 2013). For this reason, and in order to contribute to the understanding of youth work, the intention of this text is not to offer an all-embracing definition of this multifaceted and complex part of the societal sphere, but to provide a necessary overview of various patterns and practices constituting youth work as such. By doing so, this text will try to contradict Baizerman's argument that youth work is a praxis that can be seen but not described and analysed (1996).

Core aspects of youth work

When discussing the various forms and types of activities comprising youth work a few things should be kept in mind. Youth work is very broad with regard to the types of issues youth workers address, settings in which youth work takes place, levels of practice, personal values and beliefs, and the models, methods and approaches utilised (AYAC 2013). In addition, the cultural, political and social backgrounds in different countries that straightforwardly impact youth work make the story of youth work even more complicated, as well as the fact that youth work can be practised at local, regional, national, European and other transnational levels with different activities required to achieve different objectives. Despite this vagueness, various orientations and approaches within youth work can be identified that result in common categories of practices in the majority of settings.

Before we analyse the patterns and practices of youth work, in order to establish a theoretical framework, we will take note of several aspects common to youth work practice. A focus on young people, together with the personal and social development of youth, are pervasive features of youth work, as well as the voluntary participation of beneficiaries (European Commission 2014). Smith (2002) summed up the core aspects of youth work practice: a focus on young people; an emphasis on voluntary participation and relationships; committing to association; a friendly and informal environment; acting with integrity; and being concerned with the education of and, more broadly, the welfare of young people. Building on these features, Kovacic and Ćulum (2015) attempted to list the principles relevant for conceptualising youth work:

- ▶ empowering young people for their active participation in society and politics, equipping them with skills useful for the labour market and decision-making processes;
- ▶ a focus on process rather than results;
- ▶ consisting of activities appropriate for young people (they should be enjoyable);
- ▶ evidence based and community based;
- ▶ interdisciplinary and multi-sectoral;
- ▶ professional, while maintaining a friendly relationship between youth workers and young people;
- ▶ using non-formal education/learning and creating a space for informal learning;
- ▶ flexible.

The limits of typologies

So far there have been several attempts to classify different types of youth work. In Table 1, where some of the most common categories present in the literature are specified, it can be seen that the patterns of youth work vary depending on the criteria used. There is, however, a methodological issue with attempts at categorisation. Hanmer (1964) notes that categorising these apparent patterns "may shed some light on the work but they can be seriously misleading and limiting".

In other words, some of the categories overlap (for instance "community development" is a feature that can be put under the criterion of "method" as well as "objective"). Nevertheless, this typology should be taken more as a contextualisation rather than a rigorous analytical tool.

Table 1: Attempts at youth work categorisation

Criteria	Categories	Source
Method	Individual, group, community development	Taylor 2005; Kaleba 2008
Profile of youth worker	Organic youth work, movement-based youth work, professional youth work	Smith 1988, 2002
Target group	Universal provision, specific groups	European Commission 2014
Objective	Issue-based youth work, personal development in general or character building self-emancipation	European Commission 2014; Butters and Newell 1978
Location	Street work (detached and outreach) and centre-based or free-standing, school-based, church-based, local education authority	Brew 1943; Garrett 1986; Kaleba 2008; Kovacic and Ćulum 2015

Three main traditions and more?

In discussing the different models of youth work, the British, Irish and Australian traditions are particularly worth mentioning, as they illustrate the complexity of youth work.[165] Butters and Newell (1978) and Smith (1988, 2002) are bellwethers for a British understanding of youth work. As Cooper (2012) describes it:

> [Butters and Newell] devised a model of youth work using history and epistemology as an organising principle. Their model suggested that the history, present and future of youth work could be characterised by three main linear, historical epochs.[166]

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165. For a more elaborate review of the three models, see Cooper (2012).
166. Character building, social education repertoire and self-emancipation.

Smith (1988) goes further and offers a distinction between professionalised youth work and movement-based youth work, introducing the welfare aspect and claiming it as an inseparable part of youth work practice.

The Irish model, elaborated by Hurley and Treacy (1993), is closely aligned with the educational paradigm. Thus, sociological features of education inform their model, which focuses on how young people's needs are met through programmes in various areas of life – skills education, recreation, political education, vocational training, and arts and creativity.

In describing the Australian model, Cooper (2012) explains that it consists of six approaches: treatment, reform, non-radical advocacy, radical advocacy, non-radical empowerment, and radical empowerment:

> Each approach is discussed in terms of its political ideological foundations, how it constructs young people's problems, its perspective on society, assumptions about human nature, core values of the approach, motivation for intervention, types of intervention, skills required of workers, and disciplines that inform practice (2012: 106).

The importance of context

A comprehensive, analytical document on youth work (Council of Europe/European Commission 2008) identifies nine action fields recognised among European countries:

- ▶ extracurricular youth education;
- ▶ international youth work;
- ▶ open youth work;
- ▶ participation and peer education;
- ▶ youth work in sports;
- ▶ youth information;
- ▶ youth counselling;
- ▶ recreation;
- ▶ prevention of social exclusion through youth social work.

Some types of youth work are more present in certain places, depending on the cultural, social and political practices that exist there. Table 2 provides an overview of definitions of youth work across Europe.

All things considered, youth work is an eclectic, multi-perspective, multi-method and interdisciplinary field of action that depends on varying contexts across time and space. Its goal is to empower young people using methods and tools that are most appropriate to them and the specific youth work activity that targets them. Whether the youth worker, in collaboration with young people, is going to use workshops or board games, whether activities are going to be happening within the youth club or in an open space, or if youth work is simply an activity that gathers young people together to share their opinions, feelings and ideas is less relevant. More importantly, youth work should use approaches from all relevant disciplines and aim them towards positive youth development.

Table 2: Youth work definitions in 10 EU countries

Country	The concept of youth work
Austria	Extracurricular youth work with an emphasis on leisure-time activities and prevention
Estonia	Youth work as the creation of circumstances for developmental activities for youth that enable them to act of their own free will outside the environments of family, school and work
Germany	Offers for young people that support their development through their interests, allowing co-determination, fostering self-definition and encouraging social responsibility and participation
Greece	Education and welfare services to support young people's safe and healthy transition to adult life, as well as leisure-time activities
Ireland	Planned programme of education for aiding and enhancing the personal and social development of young persons through their voluntary participation, and which is complementary to their formal academic or vocational educational training, and provided primarily by voluntary youth work organisations
Italy	Initiatives that favour the access of young people to the labour market
The Netherlands	Supportive and reactive services, as well as broad leisure-oriented offers
Norway	Giving young people interesting and meaningful leisure time and opportunities for personal development through participation and social interaction
Romania	Any activity organised to improve the necessary conditions for the social and professional development of youth according to their necessities and wishes
Spain	Activities of a social, cultural, educational or political nature with and for young people

Source: Council of Europe/European Commission 2008

Instead of a conclusion

All attempts at classification, even though necessary, suffer from reductionism because, as stipulated at the beginning of this chapter, they draw boundaries around all possible methods of outreach and channels of influence. In order to ensure that the potential of young people is being fulfilled, the focus of youth work should be more on outcomes and less on specific activities. This approach allows the youth worker to adapt to the specific situation and to assess the best possible means for achieving goals. When it comes to youth work research, there is still a lack of data on best, good and not-so-good practices. It is necessary to invest more resources in policy mapping because only by listing activities that are "out there" can a comprehensive typology, a classification and a map of all possible varieties constituting youth work be made. In all disciplines where practice is more developed than structured knowledge, an inductive approach is the only way that can ensure that research and practice co-exist in a mutually beneficial way. Youth work will continue to face criticism along the lines that it is child's play, part of education, or even irrelevant. Nonetheless, the responsibility is on each and every one of us working in the area of youth work, whether as practitioners, researchers, policy experts or governmental officials, to insist on the uniqueness of approach and benefits of youth work with regards to youth, and to promote its eclecticism as an advantage and not a disadvantage.

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Where are the connections between youth work and wider work with young people?

Hanjo Schild and Howard Williamson

The question "what is youth work?" is a key issue of this publication and has largely been discussed. But what constitutes "wider work with young people"? And what are the connections between the two – "youth work" and other "work with young people"? How can and should connections be made between them, while ensuring that appropriate boundaries are maintained, through recognition and respect for principles and "distinction" (a distinctiveness with regard both to the quality and status of youth work), and ensuring fidelity to the identity, nature and specificities of youth work?

Wider "work with young people" refers to activities and practice in other youth policy domains that have a relationship to and impact on young people's lives and perhaps on youth work practice. The connections between "youth work" and "working with young people" refer potentially to the implementation end of the concept of "cross-sectoral youth policy",[167] in other words to the links between youth work and youth justice provision, health initiatives (across issues such as teenage pregnancy, substance misuse, obesity or mental health) and vocational training or youth employment programmes, as well as engagement with youth work's closest "natural" partner (if often also its apparent enemy!), formal education. Indeed, any reflection on connections between youth work and other areas of youth policy and practice invariably relate to a power dimension and certain questions: do we talk about partnerships, co-operation on an equal footing, respect and relevance, or do we talk about dependency, lack of recognition and a hierarchical relationship in terms of roles and relevance/irrelevance, with youth work as a junior partner and subordinated to the priorities of others? This leads also to a discussion about the risk of the instrumentalisation of youth work for purposes other than individual social and human development, solidarity and social cohesion – for economic growth, patriotism, nationalism and streamlined societies.

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167. See also Magda Nico's chapter on youth work and cross-sectoral youth policy, later in this publication.

The identification of the range of policy issues that prospectively impact on the lives of young people emerged particularly through the international reviews of national youth policies that have been co-ordinated by the Council of Europe since 1997 (see Williamson 2002, 2008, 2017).[168] These reviews identified a broad spectrum of both policy domains (such as formal and non-formal education and training, health care, social welfare and protection, housing, leisure services, and also the influence of faith groups and military service) and transversal policy aspirations (such as social inclusion, civic participation, gender equality, nation-building) that impinge on the lives and prospects of young people.

Furthermore, within the youth policy debates of the EU, wider work with young people is reflected in the "double approach" first suggested in the White Paper on Youth (European Commission 2001). This double approach identifies key areas in which youth policy has a significant role to play – for example, participation, information and volunteering, and other areas in which youth issues should be better recognised, taken into account and embedded (the idea of "mainstreaming youth") – such as employment, education, promoting social inclusion and gender equality, combating racism and xenophobia, and addressing the challenges of, for example, migration, health and risk prevention, and protecting the environment. These foundation stones from the 1990s have been further elaborated over the past two decades.

When looking at current priorities for European youth policies we can see that the wider policy domains that promote different forms of "work with young people" often play a more and more prominent role, both in the Council of Europe and the EU. Youth work is often a relatively small cog in those wheels. This is evident in, for example, the 2008 Resolution on the future of the youth policy of the Council of Europe, known as Agenda 2020. This states that the following should be regarded as priorities of Council of Europe youth policy and action for the coming years:

- ▶ human rights and democracy (including "promoting awareness education and action among young people on environment and sustainable development");
- ▶ living together in diverse societies (including "preventing and counteracting all forms of racism and discrimination on any ground");
- ▶ social inclusion of young people (including "ensuring young people's access to education, training and working life" and "supporting young people's transition from education to the labour market").

Similarly, within the EU, the key issues of the EU Youth Strategy (2009) are "[t]o provide more and equal opportunities for young people in education and the job market" and "[t]o encourage young people to actively participate in society". The youth strategy proposes initiatives in eight areas: social inclusion, education and training, employment, health and well-being, creativity and culture, voluntary activities, participation, youth and the world. The first five areas listed here are of a cross-sectoral nature, and we have more to say below about "participation" as a central value underpinning

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168. Between 1997 and the end of 2016 the Council of Europe has supported reviews of national youth policy by an international review team in 21 member states; Howard Williamson has provided three synthesis reports on these reviews (Williamson 2002, 2008, 2017).

what we understand as "youth work". These EU priorities have been reinforced in the Resolution on a European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2016-2018:[169]

> Youth work and cross-sectoral co-operation shall be strengthened with the following aims … increased social inclusion of all young people ... stronger participation of all young people in democratic and civic life in Europe, easier transition of young people from youth to adulthood, in particular the integration into the labour market, support to young people's health and well-being, including mental health, contribution to addressing the challenges and opportunities of the digital era for youth policy, youth work and young people, contribution to responding to the opportunities and challenges raised by the increasing numbers of young migrants and refugees in the European Union.

At policy level, according to the EU Youth Strategy, youth work plays in most cases "a supporting role" in relation to other more powerful and better resourced policy domains, in particular education, employment, inclusion and health policies and empowering young people, as well as enhancing skills acquisition "outside the classroom" or "out-of-school". In view of this assertion and analysis, in the context of advocacy for these cross-cutting issues and priorities, it therefore seems important to clarify the connections between "youth work" and this "wider work with young people", in terms of methods and approaches, principles and aims, roles and responsibilities, and also target groups.

Youth work and other policy domains working directly or indirectly with young people often face similar, if not identical, challenges and problems. First of all, how to best support the transition from youth to adulthood – from education to work, from dependency to autonomy, from family of origin to self-determined relationships and partnerships, from dependent to independent living? Secondly, how to enable living in and across diverse communities – in the context of migration, the information society and digitalisation, the increasing need for mobility, the capacity to manage multiple agendas, making a civic and interpersonal contribution? All policies and related activities geared to these objectives, in youth work, education and training, social care and beyond, are increasingly encouraged and often expected to work together in order to create synergies for the effective and efficient realisation of their respective aims. More holistic educational approaches, for example, linking formal, non-formal and informal learning, can arguably be of mutual benefit for the education and training system and the youth sector. Key competences for work, civic and personal life – the mantras of "employability", "the entrepreneurial spirit" and "volunteerism" – can only be acquired through a variety of learning methods and environments. Those will certainly include schools, colleges and vocational training centres using the tools of instruction and formal education, but they need also to include more unconventional learning spaces such as residential experiences, voluntary activities and services, in contexts such as youth clubs, community centres and even on the street. Local, regional and national networks making such connections could profit from mutual support and greater recognition through the implementation of joint strategies and action plans. Youth justice, for example, is not just about responsibility for offences committed or reparation for harm done, but also about

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169. Council of the European Union Resolution on a European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2016-2018 (2015/C 417/01).

the reintegration of young offenders if re-offending is to be prevented; youth work, many would contend, clearly has its part to play. Certainly at a policy level, there is strong consensus among decision makers, at least at the level of rhetoric, that all work with young people (including youth work) should be evidence-based (see Otto, Polutta and Ziegler 2009) and built on cross-sectoral co-operation – hence the recurrent exhortations to work together. It is perhaps sometimes a surprise that youth work has sought to resist these pressures for so long.

But such links are not without their difficulties, tensions and challenges. First, however, it is sensible to explore some of the prima facie reasons to support stronger and deeper co-operation and co-ordination between "youth work" and other "work with young people". For some, the guiding principles of youth work revolve around four "Ps", and three of the four – prevention, protection, and promotion – can convincingly constitute at least the start of a shared agenda with those who work with young people. The fourth, participation, presents more of a dilemma.

The principle of, and commitment to, participation is indeed the essential barrier that lies between the policy and practice of youth work and that of wider work with young people. While in youth work the voice and involvement of young people as a partner is accepted practice in the development of its direction and activities, debates have hardly commenced, or continue to rage in other sectors, such as schooling or youth justice, about the extent to which young people should have a voice and play a part in informing and contributing to decision making in policy and practice. Do young people in custodial institutions forfeit their "right" to have a say, or some say at least? This can make youth workers wary of engagement with policy contexts in which youth participation is poorly developed or non-existent. Youth workers are unsurprisingly cautious of arenas that do not apply, and sometimes do not even accept, the democratic and participatory principles that guide and govern the practice of youth work. Other principles of youth work produce similar tensions and dilemmas, such as the "voluntary relationship" and "the right to play and to have fun" (Schild, Senkute and Vanhee 2010).

Adherence to these principles should not, of course, present a non-negotiable obstacle to engagement with at least some policy domains that provide wider "work with young people". Nevertheless, such values and principles have to be taken into account when it comes to co-operative structures and relationships between youth work and other youth policy domains. As in any negotiated position, there will be room for concession as well as red lines. Youth work has to decide (and youth workers will have different views) what is too sacred to sacrifice and what flexibility can be allowed within collaborative arrangements. And youth work should, of course, advocate for participatory approaches in other areas, thereby carrying the flag for democratic values in more spheres of (youth) life. But some contexts will be far from establishing such approaches and not necessarily receptive to the idea at all. The idea of introducing "co-management" principles is likely to be received with greater interest in a social enterprise than in a more commercial business.

It has to be admitted that the definitive feature (and operating principle) of "voluntary participation" (that "young people must always choose to participate") in youth work has, in the past, significantly limited both the scope and impact of youth work

in practice. How many young people are participating in youth work activities and how many are organised in youth work structures? Eurobarometer surveys show how limited, and therefore relatively ineffective, youth work is in reaching out to a majority of young people, in particular those from disadvantaged backgrounds. More co-operative structures, strategies and practices between youth work and more compulsory systems hold the promise of much greater reach for youth work, by connecting with the contexts where young people are: schools, universities, vocational education and training sites, residential care, sports centres, health centres, hospitals and even custodial institutions. The question to be addressed is the extent to which the voluntary principle can be sustained within more coercive and regulated environments; it is not a question of abandoning it.

If youth work is, first and foremost, deemed to be an educational practice, then its closest and more powerful neighbour, though sometimes also its formidable opponent, is formal education. Yet formal and compulsory education systems throughout Europe are exhibiting considerable weakness. On average 12.8% of EU youth between the ages of 18 and 24 have left the formal education system without completing upper secondary education and this rate is highest at 20% and above in southern European countries (European Commission 2013). Research shows that early school leaving has huge implications for young people's transition into the labour market and adult life. At this level of education, early school leaving seems to be a matter of "personal choice" or "voluntary action". Such young people are often lost to the formal education (and training) system. They are but one of the many sub-groups who now constitute young people depicted as NEETs (see Eurofound 2016). The creation of specific "measures" for these young people, such as Second Chance Schools and, in broader terms, the Youth Guarantee in the EU[170] point in the right direction; it must be seen as both an opportunity and an obligation for youth work to connect to these arenas and to play an active role in the implementation and management of daily pedagogical and social practice.

Reluctance to do so would seem to fly in the face of our knowledge base about youth work, and the action and commitment to youth work that flows from it, striking a position in stark contradiction to the promulgation of "evidence-based practice". Youth work, often voluntary youth work, has been found to have a positive effect on young people who are (or are at risk of becoming) school dropouts (European Commission 2013). However, precisely because youth work activity is often voluntary, typically fragmented and invariably under-resourced – even when it is proved to be positive and effective in relation to another policy domain – it only manages to reach a small proportion of the relevant category of young people. This is a powerful argument in favour of formal and non-formal education joining forces[171] in order to provide

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170. The Youth Guarantee (2013/C 120/01) is a commitment by all member states in the EU to ensure that all young people under the age of 25 receive a good-quality offer of employment, continued education, an apprenticeship or a traineeship within a period of four months of becoming unemployed or leaving formal education. The EU countries endorsed the principle of the Youth Guarantee in April 2013.
171. Similar arguments could be applied to other policy domains, such as health or justice, though these are less developed as arenas for youth work practice.

all young people with skills, competences and attitudes that help them find their place in society. But is youth work ready for it? How could it happen?

With regard to conceptual implementation strategies for creating synergies between youth work and the wider work with young people, we will briefly look at the authors' respective countries. In Germany, the boundaries between youth work, youth social work, youth care and various other policy domains with an impact on young people are quite blurred or even suspended. Nevertheless, one could talk about a "pillarisation" of disciplines and responsibilities without a systematic relationship among these pillars (e.g. open work, youth social work, vocational education and training schemes for young people from disadvantaged areas, the youth care system). On the other hand, in view of the limited impact of isolated youth work, a strategy to "interfere" and intervene in other policy domains (*Einmischungsstrategie*) that determine young people's lives, in particular in the employment and vocational education and training sector (Mielenz 1985), happens not only through policy advocacy but also in concrete terms by running and organising joint projects for and with young people that help them to find their place in society. The "interference strategy" was developed in the early 1980s and counteracted the dominant defensive attitude of youth work and youth welfare, and its limited courage and (false) modesty (Münchmeier 2005). Instead, the strategy aimed at exceeding the limits of youth work and "interfering" in those other areas, for instance in urban planning. Ten years later this strategy was one of the essentials of an offensive youth welfare strategy and was even anchored in the German Federal Youth Act, wherein youth work and youth welfare services were expected to contribute towards maintaining or creating positive living conditions for young people and their families as well as a child and family-friendly environment. Today the *Einmischungsstrategie* is standard in social and youth welfare planning, in particular in local municipalities, and has experienced in recent years a renaissance in political strategies, even if substantial parts of the youth work sector do not sufficiently adopt it in their own practice. As a result the federal ministry responsible for youth developed in 2011 a "new" national youth strategy, an "independent youth policy". This is not meant to be separated from other political areas: on the contrary, it means "that aspects of youth policy should play a more important role in all political areas that affect young people in the various situations of their lives" (Stroppe 2012). In practice, this independent youth policy aims at overcoming isolated assessments of individual issues and ensuring a harmonisation of individual areas within an overall concept, including measures that create the best possible conditions for young people.

In Wales (UK), one of the first policies produced after the devolution of power and the formation of the National Assembly for Wales (in 1999) was a progressive youth policy: Extending Entitlement: Supporting Young People in Wales.[172] Though it subsequently reneged on its own proclamations and failed to live up to its vision and aspirations, its philosophical base was one to be commended. In essence, it was concerned not with addressing the deficiencies of (some) young people (such as those abusing substances, committing offences or dropping out of school) but with ensuring that all young people had the same "package of entitlement" – the

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172. National Assembly for Wales, 2000.

broad range of experiences and opportunities that would equip them well for adult life. To that end, the policy expressed no need for new structures or new professions but talked about more effective working together. For different objectives – from the acquisition of vocational skills to personal development, exchange and mobility programmes, and promoting youth voice and participation – it was expected that different constellations of professional activity would be invoked: school teachers, youth workers, social workers, psychologists, health workers, police officers, tutors and coaches in music and sports, and so on. Of the 12 core entitlements, it was suggested by analysts that perhaps some three or four would be led by youth work, with others in an ancillary role, while others would be led by different professional groups, with youth work in support. About a decade later, a National Youth Work Strategy harnessed youth work very closely to making contact and reconnecting NEETs with formal education and training, narrowing the original vision around the potential contribution of youth work to young people's lives considerably. There was disquiet about both initiatives: the first on the grounds that it was too broad, expecting too much of youth work, the second because it was felt youth work was being channelled and subordinated to a single policy agenda. Nonetheless, both policies were clear about the capacity of youth work to play a bigger part in "work with young people" than just leisure-time and leisure-based provision.

Conclusion

If we want to fully exploit the benefits of youth work carried out in various domains, locations and regions in Europe, the only way forward is breaking borders and boundaries both in policy and in practice. Throughout Europe, there already exist examples of successful practices of close collaboration among other sectors working with young people and youth work. This indicates potential avenues for forward movement: mutual learning, mutual respect and profiting from the competences of each other is possible and achieves positive results. There are particular examples of youth work working with school dropouts, both in and outside of schools or with early school leavers or those at risk of leaving. There is also youth work with unemployed youth, in and outside of working places and vocational education and training schools. Similar examples could be found in other sectors and in relation to other policy challenges, such as health, justice, culture, sports, social inclusion or anti-racism. Where research exists, there is strong evidence of the positive impact of youth work working with other sectors in successful intervention programmes. So, we now ask rhetorically, what hinders youth work in creating more and closer relationships to the "wider work with young people"?

Youth work should systematically work in collaboration, though not uncritically, with more formal sectors. As seen from the example of Germany, interferences and interventions in other policy areas and practices are needed and possible. Youth work can be self-confident and proud of its achievements and principles and it need not be defensive in its relationship to other sectors. It should enter into collaborative arrangements as a partner, not a slave. Youth work needs to be aware of the risks of such enslavement (as it often starts as the poor relation), but it should remain resolute in challenging other youth practices where the situation demands. Other sectors can learn and profit from the achievements and principles of youth work.

Arrogance on either side is rarely a good advisor. Initiatives for "bridge building" should therefore come from both sides, in the form of cross-boundary and cross-disciplinary collaboration as well as a challenge, while both sides should not negate or dilute their strengths and specificities. As a youth work colleague once proposed, what is needed is not a "fruit purée" but a fruit cocktail: not melding into bland uniformity but building on strengths and striving for the cultivation of complementarity that serves the broad-based and complex needs of young people more effectively. Youth work working alone can do so much; youth work alongside others working with young people can do so much more.

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Chapter 22

Keep calm and repeat – Youth work is not (unfortunately) just fun and games

Özgehan Şenyuva and Tomi Kiilakoski

Introduction

Study after study has shown that learning does not take place only in formal learning environments. Workplace learning, peer learning, productive learning, lifelong and life-wide learning, non-formal learning or transformative learning cultures are conceptual tools for describing the scope of learning that exists outside the field of formal education. Especially in European youth policy, youth work has been described as an important agent of non-formal learning, namely learning that is embedded in the learning processes and is in some ways intentional from the learner's point of view (Colardyn and Bjornavold 2004: 71). However, the learning taking place in youth work is not fully recognised. In our opinion, there are two elements to this perspective. Firstly, one should be able to validate and recognise the learning in and through youth work. Secondly, in order to be able to validate and recognise the learning in youth work, youth work itself should be seen as an agent that has legitimacy to validate learning.

The added value of youth work in the personal, social and professional development of young people has been demonstrated in numerous studies, as well as in the experiential knowledge of youth workers and the young people involved in youth work. Clear examples of this are the narratives concentrating on the impact of youth work in young people's lives and their relations to their communities and to society at large (Davies 2015). However, despite all the evidence building up, it is also a fact that youth work in general and non-formal and informal learning in particular are lagging behind in terms of recognition, especially when compared with formal education (although such a comparison is futile, as youth work does not claim to be an alternative, but a complementary and supplementary context for

learning). This lack of recognition is particularly present outside of the youth field, where youth work experiences are treated as hobbies and leisure-time activities, or simply put: fun and games.

As an example, when the European youth projects started to become more popular in Turkey with their inclusion within the European Commission youth programme, almost 15 years ago, there was a clear social bias in favour of the Erasmus programme (specifically for students) and against Youth in Action (for young people more generally). While parents would be proud of their child participating in an Erasmus student exchange, they would often worry about the same young person being involved in a youth exchange. They would hold the view that such extracurricular activities would distract the young person from his/her main activity: to study and get good grades. Despite hundreds of youth work projects, through which thousands of young people have been mobilised and have clearly demonstrated their competence development as a result, it remains difficult to argue that the stereotypes against youth work have disappeared. Unfortunately, this is not particular to Turkey, and youth work is still struggling to earn well-deserved recognition beyond the youth field.

Furthermore, in the current political climate demanding transparency, efficiency and evidence-based policies, youth work should be able to explicate its benefits to society (but in our opinion definitely not only) by using the perspective and discourse of learning. However, this can be done by demonstrating changes instead of surrendering to the instrumental demands of measuring outcomes, thus keeping up with the ethos of youth work (Ord 2014).

Following the guidelines of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, we define recognition of learning as "granting official status to learning outcomes and/or competences, which can lead to the acknowledgement of their value in society" (UNESCO 2012: 8). Through this process different non-formal environments come to be seen as legitimate learning environments. Validation is a more formal process: "the confirmation by an officially approved body that learning outcomes or competences acquired by an individual have been assessed against reference points or standards through pre-defined assessment methodologies" (ibid: 8). It requires both pre-set standards of learning and an agent that is capable of applying these standards.

Political framework: European initiatives for recognition

The recognition of youth work and non-formal and informal learning is part of the European agenda. The 2001 EU White Paper on Youth emphasises learning, and promotes the recognition of non-formal learning as well (European Commission 2001). Certain progress has been made in recognising non-formal learning. The studies and political initiatives derived from the evidence are certainly acting as important drivers for further recognition at national and regional levels, with varying degrees of success in different countries.

The most important European initiative offering a comprehensive strategy for the recognition of youth work is the "Pathways" document, currently in an updated/upgraded 2.0 form (European Commission/Council of Europe 2011). It offers a coherent

approach for youth work to go beyond the youth field. It is particularly important in putting forward the different levels of recognition, which helps clarify the term and frame the analysis by making a distinction according to who recognises the learning and for what purpose. The forms of recognition outlined in the Pathways 2.0 document are: formal recognition, political recognition, social recognition and self-recognition. In order to secure recognition of youth work beyond the field of youth, all levels should be addressed and handled. Participants in a symposium on youth work recognition agreed that "[t]o increase trust and credibility the youth field should strongly highlight the positive outcome and impact of relevant activities both at the level of individual young people and for society itself" (European Commission/Council of Europe). One can easily postulate that these different levels of recognition are interconnected. For example, effective formal recognition requires political and social recognition.

A major tool for tracking competence development through youth work and demonstration of these competences to audiences beyond the youth work field is the Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio.[173] The Portfolio allows the participants within youth work (participants, leaders, trainers, organisers, etc.) to identify, assess and record their competences; describe their competences to others; and set their own further learning and development goals. The Youth Work Portfolio is developed by the Council of Europe in co-operation with its partners, the European Commission and the European Youth Forum.

The issue of lifelong learning is seen as one of the cornerstones of the EU's education policy. This is connected to the ambitious EU goal of building the most dynamic knowledge economy in the world (Panitsidou, Griva and Chostelidou 2012). This requires paying attention to all learning environments where knowledge is distributed and constructed and skills are learned. Skills and knowledge gained beyond formal education through non-formal and informal means (where youth work makes an important contribution) is also on the Council of the European Union's agenda. In its recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning, the Council advised member states to develop necessary arrangements for validation.[174] In line with this recommendation, CEDEFOP, together with the European Commission, has issued European guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning. The most recent edition of these guidelines was issued in December 2015, and it identifies the main challenges facing policy makers and practitioners and presents possible responses to those challenges for the validation of outcomes of learning at work, at home, during leisure time and in voluntary activities.[175]

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173. For detailed information and to access the tool, visit the Youth Work Portfolio web page at www.coe.int/en/web/youth-portfolio/home, accessed 27 March 2017.

174. Council recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning, 20 December 2012, Council of the European Union, available at http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2012:398:0001:0005:EN:PDF, accessed 27 March 2017.

175. The European Guidelines for validating non-formal and informal learning, available at www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/3073, accessed 27 March 2017.

Recognition: for what and for whom?

In her background paper for the 2nd European Youth Work Convention, on securing recognition for youth work beyond the youth field, Giannaki (2015) addresses a crucial question and offers some answers as to why youth work deserves recognition. This is at the heart of achieving both political and social recognition. The questions are internal (what happens in the processes of youth work) and external (how the learning in youth work contributes to relevant social and educational fields).

Giannaki (2015: 2-3) offers an indicative list that includes the following external contributions of youth work:

- ▶ youth work improves young people's employability;
- ▶ youth work can contribute to education and training, supporting and empowering disadvantaged groups;
- ▶ youth work can foster civic participation and democratic citizenship, essential to the development of society.

All these issues are important for the recognition of youth work beyond the youth field. Social recognition of the competences developed through youth work and the potential benefits that may be transferred to society at large is crucial. While the individual's development of competences (which cover skills, knowledge and attitudes) through youth work provides the individual with many benefits in his/her life, ranging from personal relations with his/her peers to active citizenship, we would like to discuss three fields in particular that are beyond the youth field: education, employability and integration.

Recognition within the education field

The significance of formal learning has increased lately, despite visions of de-schooled societies. Educational policies in the West have converged both in the content of learning and in the organisation, evaluation and quality assurance of education (Simola 2015). As early as 1976, Ronald Dore talked about the "diploma disease". He pointed out that the level of qualification required for any particular job tends to rise over time and that in education this probably leads to so-called educational inflation. There is a danger that this also leads to ritualisation of learning processes. The importance of certificates, 40 years later, is obviously still high, but different efforts to recognise other ways of learning have been developed. Recognition of prior learning (RPL) has been criticised for easily leading to instrumental evaluative processes instead of creating opportunities for critically evaluating one's learning experiences (Sandberg 2014). To avoid this, individuals themselves should be given a role in evaluating their learning against the standards of learning through curricula.

Formal learning is made visible through qualifications. The outcomes of non-formal learning are often invisible. There have been different attempts to explicate the latter through its identification, documentation, assessment and recognition socially, in the labour market or in the education system (Souto-Otero and Villalbe-Garcia 2015). In so doing, non-formal learning can be seen as complementary to

formal education, though different in its learning environments and in the use of experiential methods of learning.

A study of ways of recognising learning in international youth work suggests that there are different methods or strategies in recognising non-formal learning (Kiilakoski 2015). These include recognition by the participants themselves (self-evaluation tools); recognition and validation provided by organisations using loose pre-set schemes (such as Youthpass); recognition by research organisations; recognition by employers (through tests conducted by companies); or validation by formal education. As can be seen, this means that at least some features of non-formal learning actually formalise in the process when different certification and evaluative technologies are used.

It has been claimed that formal and non-formal ways of learning are converging. The formal way uses methods of workplace learning, voluntary work, place-based education or portfolios, which are learner-centred methods using real-life environments. On the other hand non-formal learning has used techniques of certification and skill demonstration (Heikkinen et al. 2012). There seems to be a real challenge in simultaneously explicating the learning taking place in non-formal learning such as youth work (this often requires using the vocabulary of formal learning) while emphasising peer interaction and learner-centred methods.

Recognition within the employment field[176]

Young people are facing increasing levels of atypical, and often precarious, working conditions as well as working increasingly in temporary, part-time and, particularly, involuntary part-time jobs. According to the European Commission (2014), more than 40% of young employees in the EU are on temporary contracts. The youth unemployment rate has reached unprecedented levels in many European states, and overall in the EU, it stood at 22.2% in 2014.[177] Certain countries were affected the worst: in 2014 the youth unemployment rate for those aged 15 to 24 was 53.2% in Spain. Europe is being affected as a whole, while the disparities in employment rates among countries and even regions within countries are also prone to a larger scale of challenges such as population movements or new forms of migration. The increasing rates of youth unemployment, particularly in certain regions, are considered by many to be a potential source for instability and a threat to social cohesion and politics.

The EU recognises the many challenges such as high unemployment, labour mismatches and increasing numbers of young people who are NEET. What is noteworthy is that this is not just a European crisis. The whole world is in the grasp of an unemployment crisis, and young people are being affected most adversely. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO):

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176. The first part of this section is based on a policy sheet on youth employment written for the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership (Şenyuva 2014).

177. Available at http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Table_1_Youth_ unemployment,_2014Q4_%28%25%29.png, accessed 27 March 2017.

The world is facing a worsening youth employment crisis: young people are three times more likely to be unemployed than adults and almost 73 million youth worldwide are looking for work. The ILO has warned of a "scarred" generation of young workers facing a dangerous mix of high unemployment, increased inactivity and precarious work in developed countries, as well as persistently high working poverty in the developing world. [178]

The contribution of youth work to the challenges of youth unemployment is a subject to be handled cautiously. Youth work should not be treated as a solution to a problem that is more an outcome of the system rather than something young people are responsible for themselves. The school-to-work transition is one such field. An extensive study has shown that in Europe, 74% of education providers were confident that their graduates were prepared for work, but only 38% of youth and 35% of employers agreed (McKinsey & Company 2014). Youth work can contribute to addressing this mismatch by providing certain competences that are demanded by the labour market. According to Dunne et al. (2014), youth work contributes to the employability of young people by:

Developing skills that are demanded on the labour market; Developing specific skills as well as behaviours that are required to secure a job; Gaining an experience in practical application of one's skills and competences in a real environment; Supporting orientation as well as job searching and matching.

The findings of another study that surveyed the views of employers on the European Voluntary Service programme and employability were also encouraging (Şenyuva 2014: 48). Employers from different sectors indicated that the competences developed through youth work in general and EVS in particular were effective in their recruitment procedures and increase the chances of employment of an individual.

Recognition in processes of social integration

According to Giannaki (2015), youth work helps to promote active citizenship of young people through youth organisations, clubs and associations. Youth work contributes to fostering citizenship skills and competences that help European societies to develop, and this should be recognised. Technically speaking, recognition is recognising something as something. For example, the outcomes of youth work can be recognised as learning. Besides outcomes, the process of social integration requires the recognition of different groups and individuals as valuable members of society. The critical theorist of recognition, Axel Honneth, states that we need to view "the struggle for recognition as a social process that leads to increasing integration into community" (Honneth 1995: 69). Youth work can be seen as an agent producing the skills needed to act as a citizen, and can also serve as an agent engaged in a struggle for recognition for different marginalised groups. Young people can be at a risk of marginalisation due to different background factors such as a lack of further education, sexual identity, ethnicity or migrant origin.

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178. Available at www.ilo.org/pardev/partnerships/public-private-partnerships/jobs-skills-youth/lang--en/index.htm, accessed 27 March 2017.

Refugees are a clear example of a vulnerable group of young people. Within this volume, Maria Pisani offers a detailed analysis of the role youth work can play in relation to forced migration, irregular migrants and asylum seekers. It is valuable to repeat certain aspects of the issue: the majority of the refugees and immigrants arriving in Europe are young people. The new wave of refugees fleeing the war in Syria is composed predominantly of children and young people. It is also a fact that a majority have been out of the education system for some time. According to UNESCO (2012), of 5.4 million Syrian children and young people (aged 5 to 17), 2.1 million are out of school.

The integration of these young refugees into formal education systems is a difficult task. The numbers are beyond the capacity of the formal education infrastructure for most countries. On top of that, language is a major obstacle. These young people may either be included in classrooms with other students, which could lead to a range of issues, or they may be grouped with other youngsters who speak the same language, which creates a major problem for integration as it leads to the formation of different and separate groups. One should not ignore the huge challenge of the curriculum, as many young refugees have fallen behind in their learning, lacking even basic education on reading, writing and mathematics.

Youth work offers an opportunity for the integration of young refugees. European youth work experience is rich, and youth workers are equipped with a variety of tools, methods and approaches. The tradition of youth work is accustomed to operating where young people are. According to Kaukko (2015), there is a need to provide ordinary things and the little joys of everyday life to refugees seeking asylum, in contrast to the uncertainty of their former life situations and also to their current situation, which usually involves waiting for asylum decisions. Refugees also need to realise their own capabilities and learn to use their resources constructively. There is a need to bridge the existing services and to help the young to realise their potential, both goals that youth work is capable of achieving.

In their investigation of the current nature of the validation of non-formal and informal learning procedures in eight European countries within the scope of the Bertelsmann Stiftung project Continuing Training for All, researchers have found that such validations are efficient and important, particularly for persons with low levels of formal qualification (Gaylor et al. 2015). This emphasises the fact that there is a need to develop new ways of dealing with young people who have difficulties in adapting to society and European communities. There is a need to recognise the learning that takes place in youth work, but also contribute to social integration by working towards building a community of values based on solidarity – to use Honnethian phrases (1995). The efforts of youth work in promoting participation and engagement contribute to this. Although we have concentrated above on the refugee situation, the same arguments can be applied *mutatis mutandis* to the young in other vulnerable situations as well.

Lost in translation: how to communicate with outsiders?

In order to recognise learning in youth work, youth work itself first has to be recognised as a valuable societal agent. This requires evaluation, theorising, quality standards and more.

Gaylor et al. (2015) recognise the challenge of recognition of learning out of formal settings, and the difficulty of developing tools and mechanisms for such a validation to take place, at least for formal recognition, arguing that:

> a functioning system for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning will therefore need to contain a number of essential components which ensure its usability and accuracy and promote awareness and acceptance on the part of the target group to which it is addressed (2015: 64).

For youth work to demand recognition beyond the youth field, it has to address the challenges correctly. At least the following challenges can be identified:

▶ awareness: professionals outside the field of youth work, such as employers or teachers, should be aware of the basic concepts of youth work. When demanding recognition from these groups, youth work should make sure that they understand what they are faced with. While Erasmus student exchanges are widely known, for instance, youth exchanges may be lost in translation. The audience outside of the youth field may take a youth exchange literally – the exchange of people, with two going there and two coming from there – rather than the real meaning, which involves a group of young people getting together, discussing things and engaging in a learning process that potentially has transformative power;

▶ quality: youth work faces the pressure of proving both its outcomes and quality. This is difficult due to the process-oriented nature of youth work (Davies 2015). However, some sort of evaluation of quality is probably needed when youth work tries to communicate its outcomes and expect to get these recognised and validated. Quality systems in youth work probably require explicating the context of youth work and situating the quality assurance systems in a praxis of youth work, taking into account the different learning environments, methods and forms of youth work (European Commission 2016). This is possible through the co-operation of youth work management, youth workers and the young themselves. Evaluation also has to be a process, not an isolated managerial trick (Nöjd and Siurala 2015). This also requires the admission that not all youth work has the same quality criteria and level, and that learning outcomes might differ considerably;

▶ tools and documents: when demanding recognition for the competences developed through youth work, one has to face the challenge of demonstrating these competences, and presenting such a development. Would the declaration of the individual involved be sufficient, or is some form of formal documentation necessary? European attempts such as Youthpass or Europass are examples of such efforts to a limited degree. As Gaylor et al. (2015: 45) note, "For the validation of informal learning, procedures are required which are more flexible and more readily 'individualisable' than those used in the

formal examination system but which do not fall short of the quality standards established in the latter".

Conclusion

As has been stated above, the issue of the recognition of youth work beyond youth work is a complicated one. Firstly, youth work should be seen as a legitimate profession capable of producing learning outcomes. That is, youth work should be seen by other professions and the private sector (including formal education, employers or social policy) as legitimate learning that is able to contribute to the well-being and competences of the young. This probably does not happen by itself. Therefore youth work should be able to argue for its relevance, for example by theorising youth plausibly, creating quality systems or explicating what is learned in youth work. This would involve translating the culture of youth work into language that is more broadly understood.

Secondly, youth work should be able to offer some framework for recognising learning that is compatible with the ethos of youth work, based on voluntarism, participation, peer activities and having fun. This involves being able to somehow document what has happened in the process. Learning is about transforming existing ways of doing things. Demonstrating changes in the process is required if youth work aims at recognising and validating learning in youth work.

Achieving the above is not easy. Nor is it one that all youth workers are happy to do. There is a genuine risk of formalising youth work and concentrating on the needs of adult society instead of the cultures and situations of the young. Also, one can turn the question of recognition around and concentrate on the citizenship and rights issues of youth. Struggling for recognition of different groups of vulnerable youth in European societies may require challenging and criticising the status quo. In this chapter, we have concentrated on the issues of the refugees, who are an example of a disadvantaged group not fully recognised as competent members of society.

The main challenge is, of course, that whatever youth work tries to achieve and even succeeds in achieving, has to be recognised by the dominant or hegemonic agents of learning, typically formal educational institutions and to a lesser extent employment officials. One might call this a problem of translation: the outcomes and processes of youth work have to be expressed in a lingo that is understood by those agents. This might mean to some extent the formalisation of youth work. So there is a sort of dual perspective: to explicate the nature of learning taking place and at the same time avoid losing touch with the informal processes of youth work.

This is also linked with the potential pitfall of the instrumentalisation of youth work. In the search for recognition beyond the youth field, youth work may easily be turned into a Band-Aid, a quick remedy for the shortcomings of formal education, employment or the European prevention and security agenda. Youth work should continue to function for its own sake rather than be transformed into an instrument for formal education or employability.

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Chapter 23

Education and training for the development of professional youth work practice and quality standards

Sladjana Petkovic and Manfred Zentner

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide food for thought on education and training systems as pathways into youth work and related quality standards in the context of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention.

Despite the lack of a common definition and recognition of youth work as a profession across Europe, the literature points to the fact that "the strength of youth work lies in its specific educational approach linked to pragmatist philosophy, reflective pedagogy and constructivism highlighting the importance of non-formal learning" (Siurala 2014: 13). At the heart of this approach lies "the intimate link between the learner and the social context, as well as the process through which this interplay becomes a conscious pedagogical activity" (ibid.).

The trend towards obtaining better recognition represents the main opportunity of youth work as a profession, while the lack of a clear framework in terms of the professional development of youth workers (including volunteers) remains one of its main weaknesses in the EU (European Commission 2014: 184). It is obvious that the clarity of pedagogical and theoretical frameworks heavily influences the coherence and design of education and training programmes for youth workers. Specific tasks and outcomes should be clearer, and dialogue with other professions (Coussée and Williamson 2011: 224-8) should be seen as an additional opportunity for recognition. As Siurala notes: "Cross-sectorial services and programs are also an opportunity for youth work to make its competences more widely known" (2014: 25). The capacity of youth workers to relate to different professional communities

is important, as well as their ability to justify their actions by drawing on theories and concepts that guide and inform the practice, keeping in mind the high level of ethical responsibility and accountability involved in youth work.

It is important to stress that there is no evidence-based research on youth work competences. Pantea (2012) states that "[w]hen addressed, competencies in youth work are mainly weakly operationalised, rarely validated empirically, almost never tested in different cultural settings, or with different groups (i.e. youth with fewer opportunities)". The literature furthermore points to a need for "a shift in focus toward content-related competences", which should be understood as "more than a few pedagogic skills, and methods of animation" (Fennes and Otten 2008). The myth of super-competence in youth work should be avoided (Anderson-Nathe 2010, as cited in Pantea 2012), while increased openness to share professional uncertainties should be encouraged, fostering a professional culture that values the lessons learned from "what does not work" (Pantea 2013: 29-41).

Structures of education and training of youth workers in Europe

Youth work is increasingly being seen as a distinct profession in Europe even though youth workers may not have been formally trained. As Fennes and Otten point out:

> even if not yet included in an official European document, there is extensive consensus amongst those who are responsible for training and further education that qualifying and thus qualitative youth and educational work require adequately qualified personnel (2008: 26).

The authors also mention various competences youth workers should have but which are difficult to recognise and validate. The (new) Youth Work Portfolio of the Council of Europe describes competences as the ability to do something successfully or efficiently, and as having three different dimensions: knowledge, the skills to implement the knowledge, and the attitude and values behind the implementation of the knowledge – to know, to know how to do, and to know how to be.[179] Following the portfolio, the competences needed in youth work can be divided in two categories – specific youth work competences and more general ones. Together with the functions of youth work, they define the portfolio's competence framework. This elaborated framework could be a guide for the content of any training of youth workers.[180]

However, the literature points to the different institutional settings and traditions of youth work that are reflected in the diversity of education and training routes.[181] Overall, the majority of countries in Europe have a split system of education and training for youth workers that includes training for voluntary or employed youth workers, and professional studies at professional schools and universities.

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179. See www.coe.int/en/web/youth-portfolio, accessed 27 March 2017.
180. For more and detailed information visit the homepage of the youth portfolio at www.coe.int/en/web/youth-portfolio/youth-work-competence, accessed 27 March 2017.
181. The overview of pathways to qualification of youth workers presented here was taken from IARD (2001), which has been revised in a study commissioned by the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership (2013).

Youth work is not an independent course of study in most of the countries concerned but is, rather, included in careers such as social pedagogy, social sciences, educational sciences, social work or social administration.

Nevertheless, within the huge variety of professional trajectories, research points to some lines of convergence and commonality (IARD 2001 Part IV: 134):

▶ degree of specialisation (representing the position of youth worker education and training within professional and academic disciplines): one line of convergence among the majority of countries concerned is that higher levels of training seem to be related to a lower level of specialisation of the trainers working in the field. While the majority of EU member states have specialised training for youth workers on the level of professional, mostly academic education, youth worker training tends to be a part of a larger context, as previously mentioned. Youth-work specific routes in higher education have been established in only a few European countries, such as Iceland, Finland, Ireland, the UK and Sweden;

▶ theory and practice (referring to the set of subjects that are judged to be relevant for the training of youth workers): there is common ground in the basic theoretical knowledge about the socialisation of young people, as derived from social sciences such as sociology, psychology and social policy. On a technical level, subjects included in the courses vary according to whether youth work is designed as a stand-alone course or whether it is integrated into other disciplines. Training for youth workers on a professional education level tends to be more specialised and oriented towards a practical education. Compulsory job placements or practical exercises are also used to link the theoretical and practical content of training. Still, in most cases this approach is limited to the professional school and polytechnic level, while on the academic and university level practical elements are seldom to be found. Exceptions to this are university courses in Germany, Italy, Ireland and Sweden. In line with the trend of integrating working life experiences within the learning process there are many other tendencies that lead to the conclusion that in (academic) youth worker education "the time is right to invest into a systematic learning process which links practice and theory" (Siurala 2014);

▶ standardisation and recognition (referring to the degree of standardisation of youth worker training and the official recognition of the certificates acquired in these forms): on the voluntary level, almost in every EU country, a variety of short-term training has been developed. These courses are often organised by youth NGOs. However, only a few countries have standardised systems of monitoring and certification of this kind of training. In some countries, umbrella organisations at a national or regional level co-ordinate these training activities, while the qualifications obtained in voluntary youth work are not recognised at the higher levels of youth worker training;

▶ professionalisation (referring to the identifiable if not universal trend of formal professionalisation of youth work in Europe): although professionalisation is understood through and measured by the introduction of standards and practices within the field for youth workers alongside the availability

of initial educational programmes offering recognised qualifications and continuous professional development opportunities, it is not exclusively related to formal qualifications.

Along the same lines, the EU Youth Strategy (2009) states that "despite being 'non-formal', youth work needs to be professionalised further", supporting the shift of youth policy from being value-driven and based on leisure-time activities for young people towards more targeted approaches[182] that, unsurprisingly, result in more formal professionalisation of youth workers in order to address the increasing pressure to produce successful outcomes and evidence of that success (European Commission 2014). Interestingly, Lorenz (2009) and Sercombe (2009) describe various arguments both for and against the increasing trend towards professionalisation: the "professionalisation dilemma".

Against this ambiguity, there is a general need to broaden access to qualifications and professional youth work. From this perspective it is crucial that access to education and training, that is to qualifications and professional status in youth work, is not restricted. European engagement in developing youth work and appropriate education and training must not neglect the potential and experiences developed in diverse contexts by imposing professional standards that take their universal validity for granted.

Finally, while youth worker training has been concentrated on the skills and competences of a youth worker facing young people at the point of service, there is a growing expectation that (academic) youth worker training should equip students, in particular those who will work as "developers, managers and experts", with a critical approach to current practices and provide an understanding and examples for exploring practices that better meet the expectations and competences of today's youth (Siurala 2014: 4).

European perspective and quality standards

Independent of the structure of youth work in different countries under different regimes, approaches and methods, it is obvious that quality youth work and certain standards should be reflected in youth work education and training. The Council of Europe has strived for these standards in youth work and in youth work training for a long time. Offers of study sessions to long-running Train the Trainer programmes focus on the further education of youth workers (volunteers and professionals alike). By 2005, the Directorate of Youth and Sport (DYS) of the Council of Europe had already developed quality standards for education and training (and reviewed them in 2007). Fourteen criteria were mentioned, of which some were predominantly applicable to Council of Europe training courses, but others could be transferred to other education training plans:

▶ a relevant needs assessment;

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182. This should be understood as a question of striking the "right" balance between a "generic" and "targeted" approach, rather than insisting on the dichotomy.

- ▶ concrete, achievable and assessable objectives;
- ▶ the definition of competences addressed and learning outcomes for the participants;
- ▶ the relevance to the Council of Europe programme and DYS priorities;
- ▶ an adequate and timely preparation process;
- ▶ a competent team of trainers;
- ▶ an integrated approach to intercultural learning;
- ▶ adequate recruitment and selection of participants;
- ▶ a consistent practice of non-formal education principles and approaches;
- ▶ adequate, accessible and timely documentation;
- ▶ a thorough and open process of evaluation;
- ▶ structurally optimal working conditions and environment;
- ▶ adequate institutional support and an integrated follow-up within the DYS programme and its partner organisations;
- ▶ visibility, innovation and research.

The first three criteria, in particular, have been considered for a quality definition of every education and training schedule. Certainly the competences aspired to are connected to the objectives and the needs assessment.

Further, the EU aims with its Youth in Action programme (now in the Erasmus+ programme) for a professionalisation of youth workers through training. The SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres focus on exchange of good practices and opportunities for training and job experiences (especially regarding Youth in Action activities). The Council of the European Union resolution on youth work invites the member states and the European Commission to:

- ▶ enhance the quality of youth work, the capacity building and competence development of youth workers and youth leaders and the recognition of non-formal learning in youth work, by providing learning mobility experiences for youth workers and youth leaders;
- ▶ develop and support the development of user-friendly European tools (e.g. Youthpass) for both independent assessment and self-assessment, as well as instruments for the documentation of the competences of youth workers and youth leaders, which would help to recognise and evaluate the quality of youth work in Europe;
- ▶ provide sufficient and appropriate European platforms such as databases, peer-learning activities, and conferences for continuous exchange on innovative research, policies, approaches, practices and methods.

Exchange among youth work practitioners is an important element that reflects the diversity of approaches and work for quality education in youth work in Europe. But the resolution also tries to promote the employability and mobility of youth workers and youth leaders through a better knowledge of their qualifications and a recognition of the skills required from their experiences. Thus, the importance of work experience, for example as a volunteer, is highlighted parallel to formal

professional training and education. The resolution also asks for the promotion, within the context of youth work, of the development of a systematic assessment of skills and competences.

The Council of the European Union's conclusions on the contribution of quality youth work to the development, well-being and social inclusion of young people identifies not only priorities for quality youth work but also focuses on the prerequisites of this quality. Among these basic conditions – beside sufficient resources – is also the training of youth workers. Further, the Expert Group on Youth Work Quality Systems mentions education and training of youth workers as one of the basic elements of good quality youth work.

Till now, however, no common ground for quality of education and the training of those involved in youth work as volunteers or professional youth workers has been defined.

That youth workers should have (at least basic) training to ensure quality standards in youth work seems obvious, but – as shown in the 2014 European Commission study on the value of youth work – minimum standards of education for youth workers or specific training courses for youth work do not exist in all countries:

> The status of youth workers is increasingly becoming understood as a distinct profession but professionalism is not only about formal qualifications. Volunteer youth workers also integrate a professional approach to their work with young people. Youth workers are often qualified and/or specifically trained to carry out the activities they are involved with. Whilst there is evidence of some government support through training opportunities, recognition and validation of learning for youth workers, most commonly it is the youth work organisations themselves that are active in offering training or development opportunities for youth workers. Given the prevalence of in-house training, there is a need for greater external recognition of youth workers' skills and competences, based on quality criteria against which skills and competences can be recognised. There are also some initiatives for clarification of common minimum competence standards for youth workers across the different organisations and roles. (European Commission 2014: 13)

The study furthermore refers to the fact that different pathways into the profession of youth work exist in many countries and that often neither minimal standards nor a recognition of youth work as a profession exist.

The newest developments in targeted and general youth work ask for ever more training and new skills of youth workers that have to be acquired somehow, be it career counselling, health education, intercultural competences or knowledge of various religions and ideologies to counteract radicalisation-based violence. It might require new methods for approaching young people in the digitalised world, or for interaction, as well as new skills and competences concerning structures, laws and administration.

The questions that arise are:
▶ what are the standards in youth worker training and education?
▶ which elements have to be involved, how should they be provided, how are theory and practice combined, and what kind of certification should be provided?

> ▶ accordingly, where are the commonalities across different forms of youth work that can define the basic elements of youth work training?
>
> ▶ should youth workers be trained in all forms of youth work (youth clubs, organisations, information, etc.) and then specialise in one area?

Recently, a workshop on training on youth work opened with the question, "What super powers do you wish for as a youth worker?",[183] to focus on the personal needs of youth workers as thoroughly as on the skills needed for youth work. The answers ranged from being invisible, to being everywhere at the same time and speaking all languages, to mind-reading in order to immediately comprehend the real needs of young people. But youth work courses do not offer training in these special skills.

It is worth mentioning that in all aspects two main approaches to education and training standards are reflected: firstly, the practice and theory-based approach to training regarding content, methods, target groups and the framework of youth work; and secondly, the values on which youth work per se is based. Brooker (2014) points to the fact that youth work by and large focuses on two strands: positive youth development and therapeutic care. But the author also notes a change in youth work training, from more practice-oriented approaches to a theory and competence-based approach.

Youth work regimes

A hypothetical comparative typology of national constellations of youth work across Europe (IARD 2001: Part IV 138)[184] reflects further similarities and convergence among EU member states with regard to their dominant concepts of youth work (as well as related objectives, methods, issues, settings, and education and training pathways) through four so-called "regimes of youth work":

> ▶ universalistic/paternalistic: in the Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Finland, Iceland), youth work is developed as a civic infrastructure addressing young people as citizens, and providing universal access (open youth work) encouraging participatory structures. At the same time the state has a strong interest in educational objectives (especially in health prevention), where the majority of innovation happens through peer education. Youth work is mainly focused on leisure, counselling and health/prevention, and implemented through action fields such as youth clubs, youth associations, cultural youth work, sports and recreational activities, and the prevention of social exclusion. Education and training systems for youth workers are marked with the dominance of higher education (mainly social pedagogy), and the parallel recognition of informal pathways (training for voluntary workers by non-profit organisations and the Church). As a result, the main practitioners of youth work in this context are social workers, social pedagogues, cultural *animateurs* and professional youth workers;

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183. In the POYWE seminar "Reflections on expectations of youth work in Europe", the workshop on training was facilitated by Mick Conroy and Dick Smit.

184. Based on Esping-Andersen's typology of welfare regimes (1990), and the later model of Gallie and Paugam (2000).

Finland

Sharing most of the characteristics of the universalistic/paternalistic youth work regime, youth work in Finland has been developed within a comprehensive policy and legislative framework. The Government of Finland implements a variety of measures to improve the recognition and support of the development of governmental and non-governmental youth work in line with the Youth Act (2006), the Decree on Youth Work and Youth Policy (2006), and the Child and Youth Policy Programme 2012-2015.

Section 7 of the Youth Act (72/2006), for example, states that youth work and youth policy are part of the local authority's responsibilities, while the implementation of youth work shall be the responsibility of local authorities, youth associations and other youth work organisations. Among other things, in the first edition of The Child and Youth Policy Programme (2007-2011) attention was paid to the number of youth workers in youth facilities, their level of education and the length of their employment contracts. In addition, professional youth work education and/or research is provided at upper secondary, university of applied science and university level. The state funds research and development work in the field of youth and youth work. Specialised training in culture, new media and intercultural competences for youth workers are included in the university of applied sciences curriculum, covering different themes such as cultural, web-based and multicultural youth work. The identification and recognition of competence acquired through non-formal learning increases the effectiveness of the education and qualification system and an individual's motivation and progress during her training and working life. Education legislation enables the identification and recognition of competence and skills not acquired through formal training. However, the processes and impacts of such identification and recognition vary. The assessment of competence is considered difficult.

> ▶ liberal/community based: evidence shows that community-related approaches and the "open youth work" method are still relatively important aspects of youth work identity in the UK and Ireland. In these countries, characterised as liberal welfare states, youth work has been developed in a somewhat "universalistic way" and is based on (at least so far) a high commitment of local authorities to provide an infrastructure of youth clubs. The lack of national support and interest enables a strong community orientation. The main focus of youth work in this context is on leisure, community work and marginalised youth, implemented mainly through youth associations, youth centres and personal social services. Education and training routes into youth work lead in usually through higher education (youth and community work degrees), resulting in professional youth workers involved in youth work practice. Yet there is a strong need to focus on broadening access to education to various types of youth work practitioners;

The United Kingdom

In the UK, youth work is largely seen as a community task and thus the education for it is regularly provided as a part of a higher education degree in youth and community work. Youth work focuses mainly on young people with fewer opportunities and thus has both a positive youth development and social work approach. To become

a fully qualified youth worker in England, Wales or Northern Ireland, a qualification recognised by the Joint Negotiating Committee is required.

To be granted professional youth worker status, students have to finish at least an honours degree (three years) recognised by the National Youth Work Association (NYA). But Bachelor-level courses also exist in youth and community work and further postgraduate courses leading to a Master's degree are offered by a number of universities. These postgraduate courses are either in youth studies or are more focused on social work, and are offered by universities or colleges of higher education. Many undergraduate courses, particularly in England, have been discontinued recently due to austerity cuts to public authorities during and after the financial crisis, leading to fewer employment opportunities for youth workers.

Training also exists for volunteers; youth support workers receive level 2 certificate or level 3 certificate training (according to the national qualification plan) or a diploma in youth work practice for people who work with young people using youth work principles and practices. Level 2 is available from the age of 16, and level 3 from 18. Also, apprenticeships offer a way into youth work practice. They represent an opportunity to gain a youth support worker level 2 certificate in youth work practice and at the same time real working experience. Many employers in the field of youth work now offer this pathway to experience.

The main content of any youth work training focuses on basic methods, developmental psychology and pedagogy.

▶ conservative/corporatist: in countries with a conservative welfare state (Germany, Austria, France, Belgium, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, the Netherlands) a more corporatist structure of youth work can be found. On the one hand there is a strong interest of the state in providing socialisation, and the socio-pedagogical aspects are as important as in Scandinavian countries, but with a different focus. On the other hand, this objective is delegated to voluntary actors that to a high degree are incorporated into local, regional and national administrations. The context of youth work is focused on leisure, counselling and marginalised youth, implemented through the following action fields: extracurricular youth education, open youth work/clubs, sports, target group-oriented youth work, youth associations and participation, youth social work, international youth work, and youth counselling. Educational pathways into youth work lead in mainly through social work and cultural animation – qualifications at the professional education and higher education level. As a result, apart from professional youth workers, it is social pedagogues and cultural *animateurs* who are mainly involved in youth work;

Germany/Belgium/Austria/Switzerland

The approach to youth work in the German-speaking countries (as well as in Flanders) is rooted in voluntary youth and youth-led organisations on the one hand and on social work for young people on the other. Thus education and training for voluntary youth workers traditionally takes place also in the youth NGOs and associations themselves. The recognition of this training via official certificate is still a work in progress. The way into professional (employed) youth work is via higher education

institutes (colleges) or universities where courses on socio-pedagogy, social work or socio-cultural work lead to diplomas or Bachelor of Arts degrees.

In Austria, a vibrant debate focuses on the development of standards for youth work training and a professional education. Since youth work – as the youth field in general – falls within the jurisdiction of the nine Austrian federal regions, the training of youth workers as well as recognition and validation is decentralised. Furthermore, youth organisations have a long tradition of internal training courses for their youth leaders.

Recently, the aufZAQ programme has begun certifying training courses in youth NGOs if they provide quality pedagogy training. The federal regions in Austria also offer basic training courses for youth workers. Various degrees for social workers are available; this can be a university degree, a university degree in applied sciences, vocational training, or additional qualifications for sociologists, psychologists and social management professionals – it appears that it is the level of responsibility in a position and the type of occupation that determines the type of degree deemed necessary (European Union 2014, "Working with young people. The value of youth work in the European Union").

In Belgium (Flanders), no formal youth worker qualifications exist and youth workers, both professional staff and volunteers, can obtain youth worker certificates after completion of an approved training programme. Certificates are issued by the ministry in charge of youth; the trainings are generally delivered by the youth NGOs but they are assessed and approved by the ministry. An academic pathway to youth work is also available, since three universities offer Bachelor-level programmes. In the German-speaking Community voluntary youth workers can obtain official certification, and a further training programme for professional and voluntary youth workers has been set up (European Union 2014, "Working with young people. The value of youth work in the European Union").

In Germany, many routes into professional youth work exist, but socio-pedagogy and social work are typical. Education and training can be offered at university level, leading to a Bachelor of Arts: as dual education in professional academies in strong combination with practice, or a pre-service training in universities. Volunteers in youth organisations can qualify via the so-called "juleica" (short for JugendleiterInnencard, the youth leader card), certifying the specific competences gained.

Besides education and training, it is also important to note whether youth work is recognised as a profession at all, which does not hold in the mentioned countries – though it is part of other professions (e.g. of socio-pedagogy in Germany).

In Switzerland, youth work is not an official recognised profession and there are several ways into professional youth work; people with various professional and educational backgrounds can be found in the field. Social workers with a tertiary-level education have better chances for employment.

▶ Mediterranean/sub-institutionalised:[185] in the south of Europe (Italy, Portugal, Greece, Spain, Malta) a clear responsibility of youth work (as part of local youth policies) can be identified through the provision of counselling, support and even training and employment opportunities. The focus of youth work is therefore mainly on youth transitions, youth information, youth unemployment, prevention of social exclusion/marginalised groups, counselling and leisure. The context and main issues addressed by youth work are linked to recognition of increased social exclusion risk connected to rising youth unemployment and young people's mistrust of bureaucratic structures of employment and training. The main action fields of youth work are: education, cultural youth work, leisure-time oriented youth work, youth information, career services, open youth work, social care, sports, international youth work, youth associations and participation, recreation and leisure services. Education and training pathways to youth work are marked by the process of development of voluntary (NGO) and professional (regional professional schools for socio-cultural *animateurs*) courses as well as higher education degrees (e.g. a degree in social work and social education in Spain). Apart from youth policy professionals, "youth work" is mainly delivered by social workers, cultural *animateurs*, social pedagogues and social educators.

Spain

Acknowledging and sharing most of the characteristics of the Mediterranean/sub-institutionalised youth work regime, in Spain priority has been given to recognition of the different career profiles existing in the youth field through a system of professional qualifications. The value of non-formal learning has been promoted through recognition of the professional competences acquired through non-formal training (based on the Royal Decree 1224/2009, the Spanish Government established the procedure and requirements for assessment and accreditation of professional competences acquired by individuals through work experience or non-formal training).

The National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications in Spain sets and regulates qualifications and defines the relevant training, as well as the reference point for the accreditation of professional skills acquired through work experience or non-formal training. In line with the vocational training system, the development of professional qualifications of the youth work skills is integrated:

▶ within the education system, in the three degrees of vocational training that currently exist: Advanced Technician in Socio-Cultural and Touristic Stimulation (vocational training higher degree), Advanced Technician in Socio-Cultural and Touristic Training and Stimulation (vocational training higher degree), Technician on the Natural Environment and Leisure Guide (vocational training medium degree);

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185. While Esping-Andersen (1990) referred to southern European countries as conservative (due to the corporatist role of the Catholic or Orthodox Church), Gallie and Paugam (2000) stress the considerable loss of (socio-cultural) relevance and influence of the Church that has led to a deficit or vacuum of regulation.

► within the system of training for employment, in the three professional certifications that were published in the State Official Gazette (BOE) in May 2011 (official instrument for qualifications in the work field): Stimulation of Educational Leisure Activities for Children and Young People Certificate (level 2), Youth Information Certificate (level 3), Management and Co-ordination of Educational Leisure Activities for Children and Young People Certificate (level 3). The process of recognition of professional competences acquired by work experience related to these three qualifications is foreseen in the near future.

In addition, various measures have been implemented in order to realise the full potential of youth work and youth centres in addressing social exclusion and youth unemployment, as well as to increase knowledge and awareness of youth workers and youth leaders of health issues/prevention, counselling, youth mobility and volunteering, while promoting specialised training in culture, new media and intercultural competences for youth workers.

Greece

Despite the lack of a policy framework, institutional definition and recognition of "youth work", evidence shows that it does exist as a social practice in Greece, constituting an integral part of educational and welfare work and playing a role in supporting safe and healthy transitions to adult life for young people. The range of activities often described as youth work is extensive but mainly focused on leisure-time activities. The great variety of activities on offer within the sector means that intensive work is needed in order to define common categories, including the defining lines between different forms of professional practice and issues of professional distinction.

Linked to this is the fact that youth work in Greece involves a complex network of providers, community groups, NGOs and local authorities supported by a large number of adults working as full-time or part-time paid staff or unpaid volunteers (52% of "youth workers" are employees and 48% are volunteers). "Youth workers" in Greece are mainly social workers (including social-cultural workers), cultural *animateurs* and social pedagogues (European Commission/Council of Europe 2013: 31). The data show that most are professionals with a higher level of education, while the rate of professionalisation in the field of educational or social services is higher than in other areas of youth work.

The Council of Europe international youth policy review team has expressed its concern that the concept of "youth work" seems to be confused with work that is done with young people by a range of professionals, although to some extent, there is already a sense of an emergent youth work profession that, if facilitated properly, could have a transformative effect on the motivation and engagement of youth and youth work in Greece. Nevertheless, the recognition and visibility of youth information and youth work as well as the organisation of youth (information) worker training in Greece clearly needs further attention. The level of education and training of youth workers is unsatisfactory due to the lack of youth work-specific academic and training programmes within the Greek educational system. The international review team recommends that there be further development of skilled youth work contact

and communication in order to persuade young people to become involved and to support their participation in various structures and activities.

Conclusion

Various sources emphasise the need to advance the recognition agenda at national and local level, as a means to add to the validation of the competences acquired by young people through youth work and non-formal learning, as well as to give the sector the means necessary to further develop quality work. It is reasonable to conclude therefore that joint youth policy and youth work responses to current youth issues across Europe are required. Although the transition process concerns youth work and youth policy primarily, it does not exclusively concern the youth sector – it is a shared responsibility with other policy areas, such as formal education and labour policies. To be able to address increasing risks and opportunities, "youth policy" has to be designed so it represents a conscious and structured cross-sectoral policy of the youth field, which aims to co-operate with other sectors and co-ordinate services for youth – involving young people themselves in the process (Williamson 2002).

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Chapter 24

The value of youth work and public authorities

Areg Tadevosyan and Howard Williamson

Beyond the rhetoric of the youth field: winning support from political and public authorities

There are not very many open access materials on recognition of the need and usefulness of youth work by public authorities. There are three major factors behind this lack of faith:

▶ a mistrust of "youth work" because of its vagueness and "diversity" (= lack of understanding);

▶ uncertainty about the place of youth work in relation to other policy priorities, such as education, employment and health (= lack of contribution);

▶ the inability of youth work to articulate what it is and what it does (= lack of explanation).

Other factors exist, but this chapter is framed around these core areas. Of particular relevance in the current political and economic situation of many, if not all European countries, is the fact that even when persuaded of the value of youth work, other priorities take precedence when public resources are limited, such as child protection, social care for the elderly, vulnerable adults, public parks, libraries, and now the refugee crisis. This means even persuasion and credibility are not always enough. For quite obvious reasons the authorities often simply do not have enough resources to provide sufficient, or indeed any, support for youth work even if they desire to do so. The authorities are in a constant state of "fire-fighting" as regards cutting costs and improving efficiency. Youth work therefore has to consider how it can get on the priority list of a given authority to be sure that it will not be cut out, and how it can can boost whatever support it gets.

One possible solution for the authorities in this situation is providing opportunities to the youth work sector to support itself. This can be done, for example, by promoting and supporting initiatives developing social entrepreneurship projects of "corporate social organisations" active in youth work delivery. As a matter of fact, youth work is and can be supported through many sources other than the state: transnational projects, corporate sponsorship, private endowments, crowdfunding – all come with risks as well as advantages, and therefore (basic) material support and professional recognition by the authorities remain important in most cases.

Another reason why youth work is not supported by the authorities could be that the youth work sector is seen as an incubator of problems and revolutionary intentions in opposition to (in most cases authoritarian) governments; in this case youth work potentially contributes towards destabilising the political and social situation. From the perspective of the state there is in such cases no reason to support youth work, which will need to find other sources to survive and to maintain its autonomy.

Having said this, it is important to understand why the political and public authorities might not support the youth work sector. What is the problem and is it possible to change the situation?

Inter-sectoral and cross-sectoral co-operation

A strategy to overcome scarce resources can involve consolidation and co-operation with other sectors. The youth sector is an essential part of the voluntary or community sector (non-profit sector), often called the third sector, and co-operates with the public sector and the private (business) sector.[186] The key question is, how does one mobilise other stakeholders with resources to diversify support, for example through private-public co-operation? Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is one of the buzzwords in the business sector today, but often companies adopting CSR schemes do not have actual knowledge of community needs; here, youth work actors can have a significant role as mediators in linking the resources from CSR plans to the communities they work with. Furthermore, it could be argued that youth work builds a bridge across different sectors and between young people and those seeking to support them.

Community resources

Youth work serves communities. Youth work is inherently part of community work, supporting the engagement of young people in communities and encouraging communities to support their young people. If youth work really brings added value to the community (as it claims), then the community itself should become the supporting and sustaining actor for this sector. Here the essential question is, "how can youth work gain support from the local authorities on a community level and

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186. This understanding of "sectors" is different from the one often used in the youth sector in relation to cross-sectoral youth policy (see Magda Nico's chapter in this publication); cross-sectoral youth policy is understood as co-operation among different policy sectors impacting the lives of young people, such as education, employment, health, family and justice.

from community members themselves to gather the resources needed?" If the actor delivering youth work services does not receive support from the community it is operating in, then it is reasonable to ask whether the services delivered are the ones that the community really needs. A more participatory approach towards community actors and community members and a realistic needs assessment will support the design of an outline or something like a project description that has better chances of being supported by the community itself. Here the newly emerging crowdfunding schemes can also serve as a tool and platform providing this support.

Rhetoric or action

There is a pitfall in the rhetoric and the exhortations of the youth field. In most cases, the youth sector thinks that it does whatever is possible in the best way, but that it does not receive the support it deserves. This is often not a correct or in any way justified or evidenced assumption; therefore, the youth work sector should reflect on how it can possibly improve on its approaches towards certain problems.

Commitments and action

The authorities should also consider whether they are themselves stepping beyond rhetoric in their support for the youth sector. Most national political documents, strategies and policies, as well as international political agendas that states are signatory to, assure us that youth work, youth policy and youth in general are among their main concerns; we often hear phrases like "youth is the future", "investment in youth is the best investment", etc. However, in many cases these declarations are limited to rhetoric. If public and policy statements demonstrate such commitment to the youth field and the youth agenda, why has it been so hard to secure and sustain appropriate levels of support and recognition? How can all the stakeholders in the youth sector ensure that these statements are followed through on and that real support is provided?

"Popular" youth work

Another important aspect is the extensive polarisation of youth work support schemes and the focus on a few "popular themes". It is important to understand that public bodies depend on the support of citizens and it is obvious to go for agendas that are popular and easily understandable. For example, agendas such as the employability of young people are quite clear to anybody in society, whereas other strategic working directions might be hard to render understandable. But the difficulty of comprehension does not mean that other issues are less crucial. It is important to ask how it is possible to find a compromise between popular and other important and strategic themes of youth work, rather than compromising everything for the sake of an "easy sell".

This dilemma is the classic issue of individualisation versus instrumentalisation of youth work; the mission of social pedagogical intervention is one of connecting young people to their social spheres, but also providing autonomous spaces for young people. That is part of youth work's challenge of explaining itself – it is not anti-society

but it is youth-focused and building from the capacities, aspirations, resources and circumstances of young people, and not from the top-down agendas of the public authorities, though it acknowledges them and seeks to critically engage with them.

Youth sector v. public sector

The next aspect worth underlining is similar and connected to the question of co-operation among various sectors. It is important to spot the supposed "natural antagonism" of the youth work sector to the policy and programmes of public bodies, but it is also important to recognise the different starting points of youth work to most other public policies concerned with young people. The point here is to understand the essential and inherent tensions, contradictions and strains within youth work principles and practice. However, often the youth sector itself limits its position to the assumption that there is a certain lack or deficiency in the sphere of public services, policies and programmes that should be addressed and corrected by the youth sector.

A dilemma might be that in many countries there are "convenient" partner civil society organisations (CSOs) delivering "convenient" youth work agendas that naturally obtain a beneficial position compared to other CSOs with opposing or critical positions as regards mainstream public policies. It is important to ask the (obviously idealistic) question: how it is possible to balance public support and avoid a situation where only "convenient" CSOs exist, at the expense of watchdog and monitoring roles?

The default position of antagonism creates a corresponding vision of the youth sector on the part of public bodies themselves. Acceptance of such antagonism is only possible within an open and pluralistic vision of societies, democracy and their functioning that acknowledges the crucial role of civil society (organisations). Even when a public body announces a "decentralisation" and "delegation" approach, subconscious antagonism might be affecting the efficiency and extent of the support provided. How does one position the youth work sector so that it becomes a natural partner to supportive public bodies, while preserving its watchdog and monitoring functions as well as critical thinking? This may appear to be a "mission impossible", but we need solutions to provide sustainable support to youth work delivery schemes and a diversity of structures.

It may seem simplistic, but we also have to consider how to create a situation where the agendas and activities of the youth work sector are in line with and complementary to the policies and programmes of public bodies, with both working in co-operation for the common good. Diverse co-management mechanisms developed and used in different countries could be a possible solution; if the agendas are developed together there is a higher possibility of finding complementary solutions. On the other hand, it should not be forgotten that youth work is always about creative tensions or critical distance, not separation and independence. So, for youth work, dialogue and negotiation with the public authorities is as important as it is with young people themselves.

Impact of youth work: making connections

How does one prove to public bodies (and in many cases also to the general public) that the results of youth work are tangible and measurable? In reality, results are often not quite visible or understandable, and are accordingly not quite valued by the public sector and by society in general. There have been numerous evaluations of youth work, but sometimes such research is limited to the academic community and is not delivered to, or understood by, public bodies, youth work structures and the general public. In fact, these sectors appear to speak different languages. How is it possible to create and regularly update an evidence base on the results of youth work, and what would be a "language" understandable to public bodies? A possible solution here could lie in trilateral researcher-practitioner-policy maker communication and co-operation. This would mean concretely "making the case" for youth work in different settings to different audiences, without compromising and "selling out" by sacrificing core values and principles.

Tasks of youth work

Finally, we should ask how it is possible for the youth work sector to manage both "doing" and translating the results in "different" languages to public bodies and the general public, and perhaps even donors, communities, mass media and other target groups. This is a tough task, especially for small grassroots organisations that lack separate public relations departments; even maintaining a proper Facebook page takes up a lot of resources. Yet it is essential to attempt to secure recognition for youth work in different ways in relation to different audiences.

Conclusion

Despite various official statements on the significant role of young people today, youth work remains insufficiently supported politically and financially in most countries across Europe. Is there really clear political will to invest in youth today? Does youth work have a role to play? If so, it seems that currently the claims made for youth work are not convincing enough, otherwise youth work would not face significant challenges around recognition and support.

In order to foster dialogue with political and public bodies around youth work, first there certainly needs to be further clarification from both sides about the real motivation to push and promote youth work further. There should also be more effort made and support allocated for youth work to become more knowledge-based, and thereby more understandable to various target groups (such as public bodies, the private sector, the general public, local communities, and the mass media). The failure to establish a common language that can assist a shared understanding of youth work has hindered it in the past and threatens to continue to do so in the future.

Emphasis needs to be put on the contribution of youth work to the development of various solutions to the current challenging social situation of young people in Europe.

While explaining the value and contribution of youth work, however, a compromise needs be found. Using popular youth work themes (e.g. its role in addressing youth unemployment and providing skills of relevance to the labour market) to facilitate the comprehension process should not be at the cost of neglecting other important themes and features of youth work that usually seem unclear and intangible to the general public, but are in fact of strategic importance for the "holistic" personal and social development of young people today, and that will help to determine the type of society we will be living in tomorrow.

Youth work in its various practices needs a sustainable system of funding. A strong commitment by various stakeholders is crucial to assure not only the continuation of existing funding schemes but also the creation of platforms for participative decision making around new forms of financial support and sustainability (e.g. co-operation between private sector and youth work providers to set up mutually interesting long-term CSR formats, exploration of new opportunities for entrepreneurship based on a solidarity economy).

It is clear that the set of questions and issues tackled in the text are not all-inclusive and universal for the wide range of realities in Europe today. But hopefully they serve as a basis for directing discussions towards a better understanding, a better dialogue and enhanced co-operation between the youth work sector and both public and private bodies, as well as to securing better understanding, recognition and support for the youth work sector within the frameworks of public policies and programmes in general, and within "youth policy" in particular, in our very turbulent times and transforming societies.

Chapter 25

Young people, youth work and the digital world

Nuala Connolly

Introduction

I t is accepted that almost no part of our lives is untouched by technology. Technology has brought about economic, social and cultural changes in all aspects of life and with it, opportunities and challenges. Termed the "information society", this technological revolution has resulted in changes in the way we live, work and entertain ourselves, and changes in the nature of community and society (Komito 2004). The information society brings with it new opportunities for social activities, community, civil life, learning and work. Accompanying these changes are new risks associated with new ways of collecting, storing and handling data (Waldo, Lin and Millett 2007), including new types of crime, new dangers to children and young people, and increased isolation for the digitally excluded. Young people in Europe have grown up in a world where information and communication technologies (ICTs) are ubiquitous. Often termed "digital natives" (Prensky 2001) or the "Net generation" (Tapscott 1998), they have grown up immersed in a technology-rich culture (Bennett, Maton and Kervin 2008). New opportunities for self-expression, sociability, community engagement, creativity and new literacies exist (Livingstone 2008).

While digital participation recognises how technology and media offer opportunities for people to participate in new kinds of social activities, civic life, learning and work, it is also important that technology and media are challenged and questioned rather than accepted passively (Hague and Williamson 2009). It has been argued that there is a disparity between young people's perception of their digital skills and their ability to navigate this new landscape in a safe way (Christofides, Muise and Desmarais 2009). Self-actualisation increasingly includes a careful negotiation

between opportunities and risks (Livingstone 2008). A recent symposium organised by the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership explored youth participation in the digitalised world, reflecting on the opportunities as well as risks involved for young people (European Commission/Council of Europe 2015). Policy makers hope that media literacy skills will support online learning and participation and protect youth from online risks (Livingstone 2008). Similarly, digital media offers new opportunities for youth work, while also presenting challenges. Youth workers are often uncertain about engaging young people via the internet and similarly hesitant about their skills to do so. Similarly, while most may acknowledge the need to incorporate digital media to varying degrees into practice, there is less clarity about how this might be achieved (Cohlmeyer 2014). Some of the obstacles to doing so include personal attitudes towards technology and social media, confidence levels and the ability to define digital youth work in a way meaningful to practice (Cohlmeyer 2014). This chapter explores young people's experiences of digital media, while reflecting on how youth work can respond to the opportunities and challenges of this new media environment.

Digital participation of young people in Europe

Young people in Europe are living in an increasingly digital world. In 2007, 55% of households in the EU had internet access and by 2014 this had reached 81%. In addition, broadband was used by 78% of the households in the EU in 2014, an increase of 36% since 2007 (European Commission 2014). Young people also have easy access to computers in schools. The EU average is between three and seven students per computer, with laptops, tablets and netbooks pervasive in some countries (Holloway, Green and Livingstone 2013). In Ireland, 7% of 9 to 16-year-olds report using the internet in school on a daily basis. This rises to 16% for 15 to 16-year-olds (O'Neill and Dinh 2014). Despite this, smartphones are what children are most likely to own or use to go online at least once a day (Mascheroni et al. 2013). Similarly, the age of first internet use is dropping, as is the age when children begin to use their first smartphone. It has been found that older teenage boys, particularly those from households of higher socio-economic status, have greater access to the internet. In addition, middle-class teenagers use the internet more frequently and for longer in the course of an average day (Livingstone and Helsper 2009). These trends have created a hypersocial network society, with a unique impact on the lives of young people (Castells 2011: 11), and has led to a transformation in how young people communicate, socialise, learn and participate in society. Young people have new opportunities for creativity and self-expression through digital and social media, in addition to new opportunities for innovation and self-determination. These new conditions of social life also require new competences and a new skills orientation for the process of navigating, processing and evaluating information (Buckingham and Willett 2013).

Yet research identifies a growing disparity between young people's information behaviour online and their perceptions of the risks associated with information disclosure (Acquisti and Gross 2006; Christofides, Muise and Desmarais 2009). These risks may arise from their willing self-display of personal information, their confidence in their online relationships, and confusing or poorly designed site settings (Livingstone 2008).

In the online environment, privacy and security concerns are embodied in levels of trust, moderated by innate human perceptions of risk, uncertainty and opportunity (McCole, Ramsey and Williams 2010). While it is reported that young people are conscious of, and concerned about privacy (Lenhart and Madden 2007), the "savvy" or know-how attributed to young people in the online environment often fails to translate to privacy knowledge (Hoofnagle et al. 2010). Indeed, it has been reported that young people tend to overestimate their skills, are not always aware of their skill gaps, are spending more time engaged in digital lifestyle skills rather than workplace skills, and do not have access to digital literacy education in a formal, structured manner (ECDL 2014).

Research also shows that young people's online behaviour differs considerably from that of older groups. Young people tend to disclose more online (Nosko, Wood and Molema 2010) but are less likely to apply mechanisms for privacy protection, despite sharing beliefs with older adults that privacy deserves protection (Christofides, Muise and Desmarais 2009). Younger users may underestimate the risks associated with information disclosure, incorrectly believing that the law protects their privacy more than it does (Hoofnagle et al. 2010). In addition, young people are encountering unwanted content online; 95% of those surveyed by Pew Internet reported witnessing cruel behaviour online, with 41% reporting experiencing a negative outcome of information disclosure online (Lenhart and Madden 2007). An Irish study of children's experiences of the internet found that 20% had encountered things online that they wished they had not seen, with a further 43% unable to report abuse when they came across disturbing or negative content (Cotter and McGilloway 2011). A European Commission-sponsored study (O'Neill and Dinh 2014) found that 22% of children in Ireland have experienced bullying, with 13% of 13 to 14-year-olds reporting being bullied on a social networking site.

While demographics and access have a direct and beneficial influence on opportunities to participate in the digital world, improved skills are also beneficial. In addition to interventions designed to equalise access, interventions targeted at increasing specific skills will also enhance the take-up of online opportunities (Livingstone and Helsper 2009). This supports an increasing policy demand to establish, support and expand digital literacy programmes so as to increase children and young people's internet-related competences (ibid.).

Digital literacy as a policy imperative

Digital literacy is defined as the range of skills, knowledge and understanding that young people need in order to participate fully and fairly in an increasingly digital landscape (Hague and Payton 2010). Digital participation further recognises how this technology offers opportunities for people to participate in new kinds of social activities, civic life, learning and work, while being aware of the need to question it (ibid.). Digital literacy is fundamental to children's capacity to use digital media competently and to exercise their rights in and with digital media (Third et al. 2014). It has been found that enhanced knowledge is a strong predictor of safe privacy behaviours online (Christofides, Muise and Desmarais 2009). Capacity building towards digital literacy education will support young people who are digitally

literate in thinking carefully about what they are participating in. Ultimately, they will be able to exercise choice in how they participate in the digital world (Hague and Payton 2010).

A range of policy initiatives across Europe have promoted the rights of children and young people in the digital age, with increasing emphasis on skills and capacity building. Notably, Pillar VI of the European Commission Digital Agenda for Europe emphasises the need for digital skills to participate fully in society, with a view to tackling the digital divide. As part of the agenda, the Strategy for a Better Internet for Children proposes a series of actions to be undertaken by the European Commission, member states and industry. In addition, the Safer Internet Programme funds projects that empower and protect children and young people online. As well as emphasising the need for recognition of digital competences in formal education and training systems, the Digital Agenda for Europe calls for multi-stakeholder partnerships, awareness raising and effective training outside formal education systems, including the use of online tools and digital media for re-skilling and continuing professional development (European Commission 2010). The European Commission Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) was designed to enable people to take part in learning experiences, as well as developing education and training across Europe. Digital competence has been acknowledged as one of the eight key competences for life-long learning, defined as "the confident, critical and creative use of ICT to achieve goals related to work, employability, learning, leisure, inclusion and/or participation in society", and considered a skill that should be acquired by all citizens to support their "active participation in society and the economy" (European Commission 2013). The LLP funded a range of projects, among them Digital Literacy 2.0, aimed at empowering socially and educationally disadvantaged adults in Europe to partici-pate more actively in society through the use of Web 2.0 applications. The European DigComp Framework 2013 was launched by the Information Society Unit of the Joint Research Centre (JRC), of the Institute for Prospective Technological Studies,[187] with the aim to contribute to the better understanding and development of digital competence in Europe. A range of activities were undertaken towards a roadmap for a digital competence framework and descriptors of digital competences (Ferrari, Punie and Brečko 2013).

While member states take action in a variety of ways, in the Irish context digital skills are emerging as a policy imperative. The national longitudinal study "Growing up in Ireland" confirms the dominance of technology in young people's lives, with the Digital Childhoods Project dedicated to improving understanding of "digital child-hood" through analysis of datasets, including the EU Kids Online and Growing Up in Ireland projects. The need for improved critical understanding of the impact of online content on the lives of children and young people has been identified as a key target of the internet Governance Advisory Group. In addition, the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People 2014-2020 (Department of Children and Youth Affairs 2014) identifies the need for young people to leave school "with critical life skills, resilient, confident and adaptable to the changing world", emphasising

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187. The Institute for Prospective Technological Studies (IPTS) is one of seven research institutes that make up the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC). More information can be found at https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/about/organisation, accessed 30 March 2017.

the importance of seeking the views of children and young people in influencing decisions about their own lives and well-being.

Ireland's National Digital Strategy (2013) sets out a vision and a number of practical actions and steps to support more citizens to get online. It also encourages the use of digital media in education and e-learning. A collaboration with the Department of Education and Skills resulted in a series of successful Switch On workshops, inspiring secondary schools to do more with digital media in the classroom, and the School Digital Champions programme aims to recognise students in secondary schools who are leaders in the application of digital media (Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, 2016). Moreover, Teaching and Learning in Irish Higher Education: a Roadmap for Enhancement in a Digital World 2015-2017 aims to act as a digital guide for institutions and organisations developing strategies on a sectoral level. In addition, there has been recent interest and encouragement for a national digital and information literacy framework. As well as recognising digital literacy in formal education, this would include standards and competences across all sectors and levels of education (Russell et al. 2015).

A role for youth work

While an increasing emphasis on skills and capacity building is evident in the policy agenda, it is not always clear what this means for the range of practitioners working with young people. The role of a range of intermediaries including service delivery actors is acknowledged in harnessing the potential of digital media (Rissola and Centeno 2011), but the nature of this role is less clear. As noted earlier, youth workers acknowledge the need to incorporate technology and digital media into practice, but may not know how. Cohlmeyer (2014) identifies "digital youth work" as a broad term to include online opportunities in addition to offline work that might include incorporating hardware such as cameras and film-editing software. There is the potential for youth workers to support the young people they work with to develop their skills and competences to participate in the digital world. There are also new opportunities to undertake youth work in the digital space, potentially delivered through digital tools, online environments or mobile communication (Taylor 2012). Youth work in this context may be blended, combining both physical and digital communication and collaboration (ibid.). With this potential to remove barriers of time and space, youth workers can reach further.

ICTs can also play a significant role in the lives of young people experiencing marginalisation, social isolation and mental health issues (Blanchard et al. 2008). In embracing new technology and digital media, digital youth work has the potential to support and promote the social inclusion of young people. And if digital youth work is also about supporting young people to develop their digital literacy, and supporting them in addressing the risks and opportunities of the online world (Cohlmeyer 2014), then it also holds the potential to contribute to bridging the second-level digital divide, the digital skills divide.

However, there is consensus among actors that the digital competency levels of intermediaries may be insufficient to take full advantage of ICTs in their daily work

(Rissola and Centeno 2011). Youth workers may experience obstacles in this respect, including personal attitudes towards technology and social media and confidence levels. In reality, competences may vary considerably and this should be reflected in the planning and delivery of digital youth work. Davies and Cranston (2008) identify a range of levels of incorporation of digital youth work within which youth workers can locate themselves. These include universal, widespread and specialist levels. They also identify a range of practitioner profiles. These include three types of "experienced" youth workers: those on the new media margins who may not have the knowledge or skills; cautious converts; and ready responders, who are early adopters of new technology. In addition, two types of "emerging" youth workers are identified: active experimenters who are using new media and experimenting; and uncritical networkers who are enthusiastic about incorporating digital media into practice but require support in doing so (ibid.). This typology is useful in providing a framework within which practitioners may situate themselves and reflect on their practice.

Training and capacity building within and among organisations is also key to addressing confidence issues youth workers may experience in the digital context. An international seminar on using technology and social media in youth work identified learning and actions for advancing opportunity in this field. These included the need to develop a training programme for the youth sector addressing key issues relating to ICTs (National Youth Council of Ireland 2015). In addition, youth organisations cannot tackle digital literacy on their own and it is clear that the formal sector may play a complementary and potentially collaborative role in the upskilling of young people (ibid.). This is in keeping with the policy imperative around digital literacy and the rollout of programmes at second level. Given the self-regulatory nature of the industry, the opportunity for input from this sector in the education of young people should be further explored. Beyond these issues of training, capacity building and reflection among youth workers, there is a need to further establish what young people want in this respect, whether it is direct training, support or new spaces in the network society to communicate, collaborate and participate. There is a need to consult with young people to ensure that digital youth work in its full definition supports young people to develop their digital literacy in a way that is meaningful to them, and in so doing, support their inclusion and participation in the online world.

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Chapter 26

What role can youth work play in relation to the children of migrant workers of the first, second and third generations?

Albert Scherr and Gökçen Yüksel

The starting point of this chapter is the assumption that the central role of youth work is to support young people in the processes in which they grapple with their self-image as individuals, their own life experiences and future prospects, their membership of communities and their living conditions in society. Young people develop their own plans for life, which encompass both private and work prospects and political and moral principles. Youth work serves as a structure offering them key opportunities in this respect: it provides a forum for education and learning characterised by voluntary participation and self-determination in an educational setting that allows mistakes while protecting against risks.

Youth work can provide youth with spaces and opportunities for learning and educational processes that, unlike schools, are geared towards the individual and collective questions, interests and problems of the young people themselves rather than predetermined curricula, educational objectives or lists of competences.

This makes it possible to foster the development of self-confident, enlightened and socially responsible individuals capable of taking their own decisions. In addition, at least in some countries in Europe, youth work is assigned some of the traditional tasks of social work: through psychosocial support and advice, youth workers are expected to help deal with problem situations that arise from stressful life experiences and the direct and indirect effects of social disadvantages (see Scherr 1997; Bommes and Scherr 2012).

In the light of these general considerations about youth work, the first point to be made is that young people from migrant workers' families, like non-migrant young people, should be entitled to have access to youth work services and to a range of biographical, civic and moral education activities of a kind that respond appropriately to their needs, problems and interests. Secondly, when faced with particular problems, the young people concerned, like non-migrant young people, should have access to social workers who can offer them psychosocial support and help them develop suitable strategies for dealing with their problems. At least at first sight, then, there seems to be no reason why youth work with young people from migrant backgrounds should be any different from "ordinary" youth work, an appropriate amount of which, of a suitably high standard, should be available for all young people.

Nevertheless, it is often assumed that young people from migrant families somehow have different beliefs and needs than their counterparts from non-migrant families and therefore present a particular challenge for the education system and social work. Some of the reasons given for this make sense, while others do not.

The former draw on the fact that the vast majority of young people from migrant backgrounds in Germany and other countries in Europe suffer multidimensional social disadvantages. The hiring of guest workers in the 1960s and 1970s mainly involved the recruitment of low-skilled workers, who were confined to the low-wage sector of the domestic labour market. In the following generations, this trend was not only consolidated. The transition from industrial societies to so-called "post-industrial" knowledge and service economies has made the continuation of the industrial workers' careers from one generation to the next impossible. Among some of the children of the generation who came to Europe as industrial workers, this has resulted in processes of downward social mobility, with an increase in unemployment and insecure employment. Another, smaller, group have successfully moved up into higher skill and academic professions. Similar processes have also occurred among the children of non-migrant industrial workers. It is impossible, however, not to see the difference that stems from the fact that the social conflicts in the crisis and the transformation process affecting industrial societies and the welfare state have been reshaped by nationalistic and ethnic discourse and ideologies. The results of this are types of structural and direct discrimination in all areas of society – labour markets, housing markets, education system – meaning that migrants are overrepresented among those left behind by the changes in society since the 1970s: the unemployed, school dropouts and the low-skilled.

What does this mean for youth work with young people from migrant backgrounds? Not only does it have to deal with young people who are disproportionately affected by social inequalities and disadvantages. In addition, experiences of discrimination have a significant impact on substantial numbers of young people from migrant backgrounds. In Germany, this applies especially to those with Turkish backgrounds, as it does in France to those with Maghreb backgrounds – even when they are successful in educational and employment terms. Youth work is therefore required to help them to deal with their experiences of discrimination and also to play an active part in social discourse on the nationalistic, racist and ethnic ideologies and prejudices on which such discrimination is based. In the youth work sector, it is clear

that for work both with non-migrant young people and with those from migrant backgrounds, the principles of anti-racist education and human rights education are highly relevant. Young people must be able to experience youth work facilities and activities as social settings in which the antidiscrimination requirement of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights applies on a daily basis and in which all individuals have the same chances of being valued and recognised, regardless of their background or colour. However, this means dealing actively and, above all, critically with attitudes and prejudices that young people imbibe from the prevailing discourse in society.

We now come to the erroneous reasons provided by those who say that youth work with young people from migrant backgrounds is a particular challenge. These apply to both the mass media and expert discussions on education and social work. At least in Germany,[188] this view concludes that problems of and with young people from migrant backgrounds are primarily the result of their cultural origins and ethnicity. This is true even though the problems surrounding ethnic group constructs and explanations that present ethnicity as a specific cause of social problems and conflicts have repeatedly and convincingly been pinpointed in social science (Brubaker 2004; Hall 1997; Scherr 2013). Even in the youth work sector, it is still not properly understood that there is a need to explain why and in which circumstances references to national origin, ethnic background or religious identity may be relevant as regards the responses of young people from migrant background to their experiences in host societies, and why and how these young people may be responding to experiences of social disadvantage, discrimination and exclusion. If youth work naively accepts national and ethnic identities as given, there is a risk of it adopting a fatal message and continually reproducing it, namely denying young people from migrant backgrounds recognition as ordinary, equal members of society with the same rights as everyone, rather attributing some kind of differentness to them. This assumption and attribution of differentness becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy: if the young people concerned are constantly told that, regardless of what they do and what efforts they make, they are and will remain "different" from the "ordinary", that is non-migrant members of the majority society, that encourages a withdrawal into national, ethnic or religious communities in which their own origins and perspectives do not have to be justified but are accepted. This in turn confirms the prejudices of those who always assumed that they were different.

In this connection, youth workers should take seriously an insight set out by Elias and Scotson (1965): youth is a phase of life in which the central social resources for self-esteem and self-respect are not yet available, namely one's own professional status, own living income and a stable social network separate from one's childhood home. In the case of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, this structural insecurity of youth is often combined with a lack of (self-)assurance and stability that may be experienced in their families. As schools tend to favour the privileged and disadvantage the disadvantaged, this lack of social sources of self-esteem and self-respect is often not offset by educational success. In the case of young people

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188. We are not in a position to make a sufficiently qualified assessment of this issue in other European countries.

from minorities discriminated against in society, this is often compounded by the repeated attribution of feelings of inferiority and denial of recognition. This provokes a search for other sources of recognition and self-esteem, which may lead to calamitous strategies such as self-identification in violent youth cultures, the drug scene or fundamentalist religious groups, as has been shown in many studies. Youth work therefore has a particular role in terms of offering a social space where young people from migrant backgrounds can also experience recognition, self-efficacy and social belonging. This is, however, only possible if social inequalities and divisions in society are not reproduced by youth work, as when work activities for poor youth, which may be attractive only to marginalised young people, are provided in marginalised residential areas. This is because experiences of disadvantage and discrimination cannot be properly addressed by youth work if they are confirmed and reinforced in the institutional structures of youth work. That turns youth work into a mission impossible that, as demonstrated by Pierre Bourdieu and his colleagues (Bourdieu et al. 1993: 229 ff.), is unable to provide proper answers to the very problems that are of concern to its target groups, instead only offering alternative responses of varying degrees of relevance.

First, second and third-generation young people from migrant families do not, however, form a target group for youth work that is in any way uniform. Their collective and individual experiences differ in the same way as their families' social class status and their political and religious beliefs. At least in Germany, a still too small but steadily growing number of young people from migrant families have been successful in the education system and take up highly skilled jobs. For a significant proportion of these young people, their national origin or ethnic identity is less important than for their parents and grandparents or is of no significance at all. These young people see themselves as perfectly "ordinary" members of society. They regard the fact that they are still sometimes perceived as migrants in the third generation as a source of annoyance, and stemming from nationalistic or ethnic approaches to society that are to be rejected. Youth work should accordingly also move away from homogenising constructs and ethnically based attributions, that is from the assumption that "young people from migrant backgrounds" share a common feature that fundamentally distinguishes them from "non-migrant young people".

Professional youth work requires a sophisticated perception of the living conditions and life plans of its target groups – in which connection it is not helpful to assume that all young people from migrant backgrounds share some feature in addition to that background. They differ from one another in the same way as non-migrant young people in terms of social class, education, gender, sexual orientation, religious and political beliefs and preferences regarding leisure, etc. A further challenge for youth work is therefore to address nation-state approaches to belonging and identity in the post-migrant society (Fouroutan 2015) and help to renegotiate and adjust these self-characterisations in society.

In conclusion, reference should also be made to a difference that is becoming increasingly important in society: a substantial proportion of young people from migrant backgrounds are not the children of migrant workers with secure residence status but refugees or children of "survival migrants" (Betts 2013), who are denied legal recognition as persons entitled to asylum or as refugees and hence a secure

residence status and related future prospects. This presents social work and youth work with the challenge of robustly tackling the issue of who they regard as their target groups: only those who are politically and legally granted lawful residence or also those who are denied this and are therefore in a particularly insecure position. The latter face deportation to countries where they risk absolute poverty and discrimination and where a dignified life may not be possible. The opportunities for social work and youth work to provide effective assistance in these cases are limited in practice. Nevertheless, youth workers must offer their services to all young people regardless of their residence status if they regard themselves as a profession that claims proactively to perform a human rights mandate. Accordingly, they must also become involved in the political discussions about the appropriate way to deal with refugees and irregular migrants in European nation states.

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Chapter 27

Illegalised young bodies – Some reflections for youth work practice

Maria Pisani

Introduction

> No paradox of contemporary politics is filled with a more poignant irony than the discrepancy between the efforts of well-meaning idealists who stubbornly insist on regarding as "inalienable" those human rights, which are enjoyed only by citizens of the most prosperous and civilized countries, and the situation of the rightless themselves. (Arendt 1951: 279)

If there has been one constant since the dawn of time, it is that human beings move. This is set to increase; migration is part and parcel of living in this globalised world – a world we share, albeit, unequally. Young people are central to this process: often they are the pioneers of new routes. In 2013 the theme of the UN World Youth Report was "youth and migration", a reflection perhaps of how migration has intensified in contemporary times and become a reality for young people around the globe. Indeed, young people aged 19 to 29 constitute somewhere between 36% and 57% of international migrants (UN 2013).

Young people move for different reasons: for a sense of adventure, a new career opportunity, for love. A growing number are forced to migrate, perhaps as a result of an environmental disaster, climate change, land grabs, famine, war, poverty or persecution. Wherever they fall on this "forced/voluntary" spectrum (dichotomies do not work here),[189] and whether they are labelled as migrants, asylum seekers or refugees,[190] all have a right to protection, as enshrined in human rights law. And yet,

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189. Migration is often premised on the distinction between forced and economic migration – the former being associated with the category of "refugee", the latter assumed to be "voluntary". Such a dichotomy – that of volition and coercion – is inherently problematic; in reality the line is blurred. The need for human security does not arise solely in response to violence and persecution, but must include socio-economic threats (Pisani and Grech 2015).

190. Semantics matter, language is never neutral. For better or for worse, such terms are inscribed in law, and also feed into policy and service-provision responses that have real effects on real peoples' lives.

all too often, in the absence of real protection, many are displaced again and again, in the search for stability and security. The number of undocumented migrants, and those who have no legal status, is also increasing around the world – such a reality poses serious challenges to notions of sovereignty, democracy and political representation and the "right to rights" (see Arendt 1951; Pisani 2012; Pisani (2016). But of course, none of this is new and we have witnessed massive displacement before (see Arendt 1951). However, contemporary migration, including forced displacement, must be positioned and understood within the intensification of neo-liberal globalisation, the growth of transnational communities, global politics, sovereignty and borders, citizenship and access to rights. The challenge as youth workers is how we address and respond to the multifaceted and often urgent issues that arise out of the displacement of millions of people outside, and within our borders, and remain committed to a project of social justice. In this chapter I present some of the issues related to forced migration and refugee flows to the EU. I will then focus on the increasing number of young people denied juridical-political status – the illegalised body – and some implications for youth work practice.

"Burden" sharing?

In 2015, we witnessed the highest number of refugees and displaced people – at some 60 million – since the Second World War (UNHCR 2015). Contrary to popular perceptions in the EU and beyond, 86% of the world's displaced people are hosted by the poorest countries in the world (UNHCR 2014). For this reason alone, an understanding of forced migration and the lived realities of displaced youth must be positioned within the realm of global politics, transnational transformations, neo-liberalism and North/South relations (Castles 2003; Betts 2009).

Neo-liberalism has increased the demand for casual, exploitable labour. The contradictions rooted in globalisation produce a toxic nexus, wherein migrants embody this disposable workforce, but are denied the privileges of citizenship. In order to keep unwanted migrants at bay, and despite the ongoing refugee crisis in Africa and the Middle East, EU member states[191] have implemented restrictive asylum policies, and increasingly punitive policies deployed to fight "illegal" migration. Such technologies of control have contributed to the externalisation of borders, which not only is indicative of ongoing convoluted efforts to avoid the international obligations of EU states as enshrined in the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951), but also perpetuates the disproportionate responsibility faced by countries beyond their borders – often the poorest in the world. If we shift our attention to the "crisis" unfolding within the EU as I write, the "immediate operational, budgetary and legal measures" that form part of the European Agenda on Migration include efforts to tackle smuggling networks, mobilising funds for humanitarian and development assistance, and the relocation of 22 000 refugees from outside of Europe (European Commission 2015). Ergo, the response to the refugee crisis is largely focused on

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191. The EU is not alone in this approach. Similar practices have been implemented in the US, Australia and beyond, wherein borders have shifted from territorial boundaries beyond and within, justified by the manipulation of national and international law. These so called "smart" borders are established to ensure that "security threats" are blocked, while the "trusted" are free to cross (see Heiskanen 2014: 70).

preventing refugees and other displaced migrants from reaching EU borders (see Pisani 2016; Vaughan-Williams 2015).

The upshot of these containment efforts and the externalisation of borders has contributed to the expansion of protracted refugee contexts. Throughout the world refugees and migrants remain warehoused in limbo, denied access to the most basic human rights including work, residence, mobility and legal status (Hyndman 2011). Under such circumstances, the political and humanitarian responses adopted by the EU can be seen as no less than a fig leaf. Indeed, Agamben (1998) suggests that failure to interrogate humanitarian practice and its separation from "politics" can be understood as complicity with its failure to challenge political abuse of power. Policies and strategies put in place by liberal democratic countries, for example, are a flagrant denial of the liberal democratic norms and human rights established to protect refugees and other displaced people. Transit countries, such as Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan are presently hosting millions upon millions of refugees in protracted refugee contexts, while commitments to relocate 22 000 refugees to Europe as a show of "solidarity" (European Commission 2015), is nothing short of abusive and ludicrous.

In short, the misery and dehumanisation processes experienced by displaced people in countries of origin, transit and host countries, cannot and must not be divorced from the arena of global politics and how it lends to the normalisation and justification of the denial of basic human rights. Moreover, given their predicament, it can come as no surprise that displaced people will attempt to reach protection in the hope of a better life elsewhere.

Illegalised young people crossing the EU's blue borders

Visa restrictions and the absence of legal, safe means of travel, brought about by the over-securitisation of EU borders, has contributed to the proliferation of ever more dangerous and unscrupulous smuggling networks. In their search for safety and protection, refugees and other migrants are forced to turn to alternative means of travel – too often with deadly consequences.[192] The UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants has expressed concern, arguing that EU policy on border controls and the absence of legal, safe alternatives for seeking refuge produces a lucrative market for smugglers (OHCHR 2015). The lack of viable, safe and legal alternatives compounds human rights violations and compels refugees and other forced migrants to turn to smugglers. In so doing, they are illegalised by an immigration system that provides no other option.

In 2014, almost 4 in every 5 asylum seekers in the EU-28 were under 35 years of age (79%) and more than 23 000 unaccompanied minors (that is under the age of 18 and travelling alone) requested asylum in one of the EU-28 countries (Eurostat 2015). In 2015, more than a million migrants and refugees reached the EU, and by November of the same year 9% were registered as unaccompanied minors. The majority of refugees and migrants reaching the shores of the EU then, are young

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192. In 2015 the number of deaths in the Mediterranean was estimated at 3 695 (Missing Migrants Project 2015).

people fleeing civil war, political unrest and persecution.[193] The increase in numbers, combined with non-functioning asylum systems at the external borders and in new transit states, and limited resources, ensured that the Common European Asylum System (that never was) finally imploded. The political crisis (verging on a hysterical response) that ensued, ensured a state of chaos (see EurActive 2015). Squabbling among the member states as to who should take responsibility and how, has led to the drawn-out misery of refugees and migrants, exposed to razor-fenced borders, extreme weather conditions, food shortages, police violence, no sanitation provision and impossible living conditions (see the statement by the UN's Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants in 2015).[194]

For more than a decade, the EU response to the arrival of asylum seekers crossing the Mediterranean has been one of secondary containment, with efforts to prevent asylum seekers and other forced migrants from leaving the country of entry. Such policies placed a disproportionate responsibility on the external border states, and led to secondary, often irregular movements. Under such circumstances national security concerns took precedence over humanitarian concerns and basic respect for human rights. The securitisation of borders, and an illegalisation process both in discourse and policy, has led to the arbitrary detention of young asylum seekers, often in inhumane conditions and in violation of international humanitarian law and human rights law, including the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Indeed, young people under the age of 18 have been detained throughout the EU, and beyond (International Detention Coalition 2012).

The politics of securitisation establishes an "us" and "them" dichotomy. Massaged by historical and racialised discourses, the "illegal" body, the non-citizen, is rendered docile: the nation state has the right to exclude and rights can be violated. Thus, couched as a "threat" to European security and national well-being and belonging, individual member states (often backed by their citizens' support) have established an arsenal of technologies of control and exclusion targeting unwanted migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. Detention and denying access to basic rights such as education, employment and housing are now common practices.

EU member states are moving agonisingly slowly to meet their commitments on relocation of asylum seekers, while emergency summit after emergency summit showcases their internal bickering, while rarely producing realistic solutions. The political crisis that has marked the "refugee crisis" ensures protracted misery for the vast majority of asylum seekers arriving in the EU. That said, it is hoped that since the majority of asylum seekers arriving in the EU are fleeing war and persecution, they will eventually be granted some form of international protection (EASO 2015). However, some will be offered temporary protection with no possibility of citizenship or long-term security and stability (UNHCR/Integra Foundation 2015). Also, a significant number will not be registered by the authorities or will have their request for protection rejected, rendering them "undeserving" or "illegal", and thus (erroneously) justifying the violation and further denial of rights (PICUM 2015).

193. These included young people from Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq and Eritrea (EASO 2015).
194. Available at www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=16641&LangID=E, accessed 2 April 2017.

Certainly, the number of young undocumented and/or irregularly residing migrants living in the EU is set to increase and, as Bauder (2013: 91) demonstrates, lack of access to citizenship and other rights also contribute to the further illegalisation, criminalisation and exploitation of migrants. The remainder of this chapter will focus on this particular category of young people and implications for youth work.

Illegalised bodies: time for an epistemological shift

What I have tried to demonstrate in this chapter, albeit briefly, is how an understanding of forced migration and human displacement cannot be dissociated from issues of geopolitics, neo-liberal globalisation and importantly, the nation state. The sovereign nation state demarks not only the border with another state, but also the border between the citizen and the non-citizen. It is this reality that goes to the core of how liberal states treat the "illegal body" and, more importantly, how lives are experienced and lived out at the margins, excluded from the basic rights and protection that citizens take for granted. Such a scenario also calls for a need to critically interrogate the "statist" hegemony that accompanies what I have described as the "citizenship assumption" within youth work literature (Pisani 2012, 2016).

In the case of undocumented/illegal/irregular (the labels are many) young people, claims such as "young people are citizens, too – and now" (Davies 2015: 103) simply cannot be made, and the transition from minor to adult will not provide for the "right to rights". In the same way, the focus on materialist concerns, and class relations between youth and adults with regard to earning power and the transition from education to work (Côté 2014) fails to capture the lived realities and concerns of undocumented or irregularly residing young people – the right to education and employment cannot be made. Citizenship, therefore, is the source of exclusion of these young people; denied membership to the nation, they are pushed to the margins, and forced to transgress the law in order to survive (Arendt 1951). For young people who lack juridical-political status, then, exclusion from rights is sanctioned by the state, and social justice issues (including for example access to education and employment) cannot be pursued and framed within sovereign structures and liberal democratic norms that we assume apply to all.

Implications for youth work practice

If, as youth workers, we are committed to tipping "the balances of power in their favour" (Davies 2015: 100) citizenship can no longer be taken as the natural order of things. For the purpose of this chapter, my focus is not on understanding how the hegemony of the nation state and citizenship operates (a necessary prerequisite to transformation), but rather, I would like to reflect on the possibilities for political empowerment for young people denied citizenship. The 2nd European Youth Work Declaration highlights "advancing democracy, human rights, citizenship, European values, participation, equal opportunities and voice" as one of the dimensions of the role and impact of youth work. As I have already noted, not all young people will transition into voters, and this has direct consequences for youth work policy and practice. Where sovereignty, the nation state and democracy converge, illegalised bodies are pushed out, as are their possibilities of having a voice, and being heard:

they are rendered powerless. This is not to suggest that young undocumented migrants lack agency or power (the images we have witnessed on our TV screens are testimony to their strengths and resilience). However, at a political level, the decision to resist, and the possibilities therein, are directly related to juridical-political status, and go beyond the social meanings assigned to "categories" of persons such as "race"/ethnicity, dis/ability, social class and indeed age (although, of course, they constitute an important factor in political engagement).

One may argue that every individual has the right to engage politically, and ideologically, I would support this notion, premised on the idea of inalienable rights and all human beings being equal. Citizenship is a social construct (a point that must be challenged and exposed), however the granting of "citizenship" is a procedural, formal juridical-political act that has unequivocal implications for political practice, community engagement and social inclusion.

The challenges for youth work policy and practice, then, are clear. That said, the 2nd European Youth Work Declaration underlines the key principles that inform youth work practice, and that common ground on which practice is based, namely creating spaces for young people, and providing bridges in their lives. The following serves as an impetus for further discussion and, I hope, reflections on youth work policy and practice:

▶ as established in the declaration, creating spaces and providing bridges are the crucial elements aimed at supporting personal development. This requires moving beyond the "illegal" label. These young people must be seen first and foremost as young people – unique and multifaceted individuals with hopes, dreams and fears;

▶ the rise in right-wing populist political parties, tabloid press headlines and heated political debates among the EU member states have all contributed to the demonisation and dehumanisation of migrants in political and public discourse – these young men embody the contemporary folk devil. The focus on processes and the needs of young people can serve as a humanising process, and a focus on dialogue provides the possibilities to get to know, and understand the needs of, the "Other";

▶ illegalised young migrants are excluded from the liberal democratic practices we have taken for granted, as they are not citizens or voters in the making. This means fostering "civil spirit" and shared responsibilities is paradoxical at best. Likewise, strengthening their involvement in decision-making processes at local, regional, national and European levels is a challenge not to be underestimated. That said, the nurturing of a self-conscious democratic practice, the importance of participatory principles, and creating possibilities to speak unto power and tipping the balance of power in their favour has never been more vital;

▶ the securitisation of migration has led to increased policing and surveillance. Young people denied juridical-political status live in constant fear of the authorities. They are also less likely to report crimes for fear of, for example, detention or deportation (ENAR 2014). In light of such realities the voluntary principle, and indeed the provision of safe spaces, comes to the fore, wherein

young people may feel free to engage, and withdraw, on a voluntary basis without sanction;

▶ many of the transitions we would normally associate with young citizens (or citizens in the making) are hijacked as a result of their juridical-political status. As such, the transition to training, further education and/or the labour market is not so clear cut. Creating their own spaces may necessarily lead to working outside the law in order to survive. The need for the bridging support and advocacy provided by youth work to speak in spaces where they are denied a voice is crucial;

▶ by virtue of their lack of juridical-political status these young people will often have to depend on others to speak up on their behalf. The commitment to tipping the balance of power in their favour must extend to youth workers advocating on their behalf, speaking in spaces where their voice – their very personhood – is denied. Supporting young people's social inclusion demands speaking unto power, challenging nationalistic and racist discourse, and demanding rights that are systematically denied. Failure to do so suggests complicity with the abuse of power and the perpetuation of the same. Youth workers can advocate on behalf of young people denied juridical-political status: the challenge is to provide a true voice, and not re-colonise their voices and perpetuate their marginalisation and invisibility;

▶ one must also raise the question of representation: do youth workers have the legitimate authority to represent these young people? Certainly in order to truly advocate one needs to know the individuals concerned – and this can only be achieved through reaching out, listening, building trust, and creating the conditions to engage in critical and authentic dialogue. Such processes will be outcomes informed, rather than outcomes led.

Some reflections on emerging practice

It is clear that the number of young undocumented and/or irregularly residing migrants living in the EU and beyond is set to increase – a reality that cannot be ignored. Youth work is always called upon to adapt to changing circumstances, realities and needs, and embrace new challenges. The Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention highlights the need to engage with new technologies and digital media, and increasing cultural diversity, as two key challenges that call for adaptive responses that stay true to youth work's core principles. In many ways young forced migrants embody these contemporary challenges.

Social networks play a central role in the process of forced migration. In the years that I have been working with young asylum seekers I have seen how the use of smartphones and social networking sites such as Facebook has evolved. They are used for planning routes and arranging travel, and communicating with friends and family. New technologies and digital media are critical to their survival. In my own practice I have also found social networking sites offer the possibility of a safe space where these youth can share a laugh, talk about their challenges, and offer each other support. These virtual groups provide a sense of belonging and identity. However, like a double-edged sword, such sites are often also the platform used to

spread hate speech and incite racial violence. This reality leads us directly to the second challenge facing youth work practice, that of increasing cultural diversity across Europe and the focus on "integrating young people and supporting inter-cultural learning", as noted in the Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention. As I write, thousands of people are taking to the streets of Germany in protest against the sexual assaults against women that occurred on New Year's Eve in the city of Cologne. The justified anger in the face of sexism sits on a precipice; fuelled by racist and anti-immigrant sentiments, any discussion risks descending into an angry rant that serves to demonise, essentialise and homogenise all young black/Muslim/dark-skinned asylum seekers. The need for critical – sometimes uncomfortable – questions and dialogue must be had, and youth workers can be central to this process. Youth workers can provide the spaces and opportunities to understand contexts (that must be historically contextualised); to take account of the different voices and social divisions that are represented in symbols, texts and images, and experienced in real life in terms of inclusion and exclusion; to create the conditions and opportunity to debate racism, sexism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination and oppression; and to speak about democracy, rights, citizenship, and their limitations. This includes conversations about identities, the complexity of each multifaceted individual, and how age intersects with race (including whiteness), ethnicity, gender, dis/ability and other social divisions including juridical-political status in shaping young people's choices and opportunities. Youth workers cannot continue to take citizenship for granted.

Conclusion

This chapter serves as a small attempt to understand the forced displacement of young people, and how their lived realities must be positioned and understood within the intensification of neo-liberal globalisation, the growth of transnational communities, global politics, sovereignty and borders, citizenship and access to rights.

As wars continue to rage in Syria and beyond, and as long as global inequalities persist, young people will continue to migrate in their search for protection, access to basic human rights, and a better life. As long as nation states maintain a securitised approach to migration and asylum, negating their international obligations, the rights of young displaced people will continue to be violated, and the number of undocumented migrants, and those without any legal status will increase, within and beyond the borders of the EU. Not all young people transition into citizenship, so the right to rights cannot – and must not – be assumed. If youth work is committed to tipping the balance of power in favour of all young people, it cannot be complicit with the statist approach to social justice, but rather must commit to a practice that places the needs of young "illegalised" youth at the centre of its practice.

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Chapter 28

Youth radicalisation and the role of youth work in times of (in)security

Dora Giannaki

"Only a balance between measures to combat violent extremism and measures to build inclusive societies can keep Europeans safe".

Snežana Samardžić-Marković, Director General for Democracy, Council of Europe.

Introduction

There is no doubt that since 2008 and the outbreak of the global financial crisis, there has been a sharp radicalisation of young people, in terms of their social and political identities. This development exhibits both continuities and differences with earlier waves of protest movements from the 1960s onwards. Protest politics gained ground over more traditional forms of political participation especially among the young, with a proliferation of related practices, ranging from demonstrations and acts of political disobedience to riots, violent episodes, anomic behaviour and even extreme political choices (e.g. supporting fascist and Nazi political organisations). This is not, of course, to argue that all these phenomena can be put in one and the same basket, constituting a linear continuum; on the contrary, as we shall see, some of these practices are inspired by anti-authoritarian, egalitarian impulses, while others obey authoritarian, strongly hierarchical and violent worldviews. Typical examples of this radicalised behaviour were, on the one hand, the youth riots in Greece in 2008 and England in 2011, the Occupy Wall Street movement, the Spanish indignados, the Arab Spring in the Middle East and North Africa, the large student demonstrations with educational demands in Britain, Chile, the United States, etc. On the other hand, political concerns about youth radical-isation – previously focusing on racist and xenophobic incidents – has gained new momentum more recently with widely reported cases of young European citizens travelling to Syria to fight, mostly alongside the Syrian opposition (Bigo et al. 2014: 6). As Bigo et al. maintain, although:

> the potential appeal for young people to join conflicts were already raised during the Bosnian war (1992-1995), the first Chechen war (1994-1996), the Second Intifada (2000-2005), and the war in Afghanistan that started in 2001 … [t]he situation in Syria has gained more importance because of the number of individuals involved (ibid: 14).[195]

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195. With regard to the role of young people in conflicts at the global level, it is characteristic that in 2009 more than 300 000 children and young people (those under the age of 18) were serving as combatants, fighting in almost 75% of world conflicts (Bott et al. 2009: 65).

In particular, in December 2015 the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation estimated the number of European citizens joining the Syrian rebels to be around 4 000, with France, Germany and the UK figuring as the biggest contributors (BBC 2016).[196] The supposed threat posed by these young fighters for the rest of Europe's citizens but also the potential harm for the young people themselves – as a result of their participation in extremist and terrorist groups – placed the issue of youth radicalisation at the top of the European political agenda. Hence both the EU and the Council of Europe have produced policy documents and recommendations calling on their member states to increase their efforts to prevent radicalisation and extremism.[197]

Against this background, the main aim of this chapter will be to discuss the role of youth work in dealing with the troubling dimensions of youth radicalisation in times of (in)security and intensive securitisation.[198] The chapter will be divided into three sections. In the first section, we will provide a short outline of the phenomenon of youth radicalisation, focusing on the factors, motives and benefits that drive young people to violent radicalisation. In the second section we will explore the potential contribution of youth work to the prevention of youth radicalisation. Finally, in the third section we will review some criticisms of the current counter-radicalisation programmes, which may problematise the involvement of youth work in these efforts. Our conclusion is that although youth work can indeed contribute to the prevention of violent youth radicalisation or to the promotion of positive radicalism

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196. However, many put the overall figure of identified and unidentified people far higher. It is characteristic that just from Britain, 800 individuals "have gone to Syria to fight or support Isis since 2012, while a further 600 have been caught trying to enter (The Observer 2016). Concerning the demographics of people who become radicalised and turn to violence in the West, these are "young and male, generally aged between mid-teens and mid-20s" (Christmann 2012: 23), that is, "younger than reported in the past" (Bott et al. 2009: 4). In addition, research suggests that "there appear to be more females joining the ranks of terrorist organisations", although their role – at least in Islamic radicalisation – appears to remain mainly supportive (Bott et al. 2009: 4, 23). In any case, it is a misconception that violent extremism and terrorism exclusively concern men.

197. For instance, in January 2014 the European Commission drafted the Communication "Preventing radicalisation to terrorism and violent extremism: strengthening the EU's response" (European Commission 2014), while in June 2014 the Council of the European Union adopted a revised EU strategy on preventing radicalisation and recruitment, see http://register.consilium.europa. eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%2014469%202005%20REV%204, accessed 2 April 2017. In the same vein, in May 2015 the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopted an Action Plan setting out a variety of concrete measures in the public sector and on the internet to prevent and fight violent radicalisation, see www.coe.int/t/DGHL/STANDARDSETTING/PRISONS/ PCCP%20documents%202015/CM%20Action%20Plan.pdf, accessed 2 April 2017. One of the initiatives taken within this framework was the establishment of the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), "an EU-wide umbrella network connecting key organisations and networks of local actors involved in preventing radicalisation to terrorism and violent extremism, including first-line practitioners and field experts, such as social and health workers, teachers, civil society organisations, including victims' groups, as well as policy makers, local authorities, law enforcement officers, prosecutors, security officials, counter terrorism specialists, think tanks, institutes and academics" (European Commission, no date).

198. Here the term securitisation is used according to the definition given by the Copenhagen School, which is represented by Barry Buzan and Ole Waever with their collaborators at the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute (CORPI). See Buzan, Waever and de Wilde 1998.

(so-called "healthy" political activism), if the youth work sector takes part in counter-radicalisation programmes that are limited to security concerns it will risk losing its credibility among the young.

Defining and explaining youth radicalisation: factors, motives and benefits

Before exploring the factors that make young people vulnerable to (violent) radicalisation, it is necessary to provide a definition of the key term of this chapter: what do we mean by "youth radicalisation"? The way in which the terms "radical", "radicalised" and "radicalisation" are used differs across Europe, with important implications not only for the formation of policy objectives but also for the operational shaping and implementation of relevant programmes and projects; in particular, in some countries the term "youth radicalisation" refers exclusively to Islamic radicalisation, while in others the emphasis is given to other forms of extremism, such as far right or far left ideologies. In order to cover all types of radicalisation (including animal rights and environmental extremism) we adopt a mixed approach according to which (youth) radicalisation is defined as "the process through which an individual changes from passiveness or activism to become more revolutionary, militant or extremist, especially where there is intent towards, or support for, violence" (ISD 2010: 2).[199]

At this point it is clearly necessary to highlight that the development of radical notions in young people should not be defined as something problematic per se.[200] On the contrary, the passion that young people often develop for radical ideologies and thoughts may indicate that young people are politically involved and in search of an active citizenship (IBZ 2014: 2, 7). Thus, as put by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE):

> [w]hile radicalisation is often understood and spoken with a negative connotation, it was argued that youth should be radicalised towards peace and democracy. Youth should be encouraged to embrace and actively promote peace, tolerance and democracy although these may be held as radical ideas in their communities (OSCE 2013: 3).

For instance, if we consider the role of student movements throughout history, we can see that in many cases student movements acted as a counterforce to systematic oppression (societal, political or economic), that is, as a transmitter of progressive ideas and values and as a catalyst for positive change.[201]

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199. Within the framework of the project STRESAVIORA, radicalisation has been described as follows: "The process of [an individual or a group] adopting an extremist belief system [inspired by philosophical, religious, political or ideological notions], including the willingness to use, support or facilitate violence [or undemocratic means], as a method to effect [drastic] societal change" (IBZ 2014: 2).
200. Similarly, the OSCE stresses that "[h]olding views or beliefs that are considered to be radical or extreme, as well as their peaceful expression, should not be considered crimes per se. Non-violent forms of extremism should not be the object of law enforcement measures unless associated with another unlawful act, as legally defined in compliance with international human rights law" (OSCE 2013: 4).
201. For a more comprehensive analysis of the role of student movements throughout history, see Burg 1998.

At any rate, regarding the study of the phenomenon of youth radicalisation, one should keep in mind the following points:

> youth radicalisation should not be seen as a mechanical, linear process, but as a relational dynamic (Bigo et al. 2014: 6, 11);[202]

> youth radicalisation is a hugely complex phenomenon;[203]

> there is no evidence of a single profile to describe young people who become radical (IBZ 2014: 2; Bott et al. 2009: 12).[204]

But what are the underlying factors that influence youngsters in the process of radicalisation? Given the fact that the psychological explanations of radicalisation have failed to designate a "terrorist personality" or some other distinguishing personality traits (e.g. some form of pathology), societal-level explanations appear to be the commonest form of explanation for violent radicalisation in the relevant literature (Christmann 2012: 23, 24). In particular, it seems that the experience of relative deprivation, personally or at the wider group level (i.e. the relative fortunes of the Muslim world in comparison to the West), is considered one of the root causes of youth radicalisation; it "operates through an awareness of what others have in relation to the perceivers (materially, culturally or in terms of social status) and when they perceive these differences to be meaningful and potentially unjust" (ibid.: 24). Indeed, several studies have demonstrated that youth unemployment – but also other structural inequalities, such as poverty and low educational attainment – is one of the key issues contributing to youth radicalisation and extremism, because "when young people are refused a job for having extra knowledge and experience they might develop a sense of despair and frustration" (OSCE 2015: 23).[205]

Apart from relative deprivation theory, another explanation for youth radicalisation is related to discrimination that individuals or certain communities are experiencing, which results in a sense of alienation from wider society. In Christmann's words:

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202. In fact, it has been argued that radicalisation is a "gradual process … that requires a progression through distinct stages and happens neither quickly not easily" (Christmann 2012: 10).

203. Indeed, "there is no single pathway" and most agree that there are many factors that may contribute towards an individual becoming radicalised (Observer 2016; ISD 2010: 2). In this respect, Bigo et al. point out that "the analysis of the socio-political sequences of action and contexts, of interrelationships between social structures, political contexts and biographical exposure in which violence is embedded is key to understand the process of radicalisation" (2014: 12).

204. On the contrary, what appears to characterise radicalised people (e.g. Islamic extremists, at least in the West) is "their normality and ordinariness" (Christmann 2012: 23, 31; Bigo et al. 2014: 12). Indeed, as Bott et al. have pointed out "[t]he young persons who have been recruited or radicalised span a range of ages and developmental stages, include both males and females, have varying skill sets and education levels, and appear to have grown up in a variety of environments" (2009: 12).

205. For instance, a study on the interrogation transcripts of 600 young men held at the Guantanamo Bay detention centre has indicated that for a number of detainees, mainly unskilled and semi-skilled labourers, "going on jihad was 'alternative employment'" (Curcio 2005: 53). However, it may also be the case that better or even highly qualified young people radicalise because the promise of smooth transition to the labour market for the better qualified does not work any more in some countries.

the intensity of feeling experienced in cases of discrimination, hostility and blocked mobility can underlie a change in identity formation, prompting a "cognitive opening" and change in previous belief systems which may lead the individual to alternative discourses, such as radical Islam, that provide ideological explanations and repertoires of action to overcome it (Christmann 2012: 25).

In the same vein, other studies suggest that residential segregation (or self-segregation) of some communities (mainly of Muslim communities) plays a substantial role in the radicalisation process by "hindering mutual understanding between communities and reinforcing mistrust and the fear of the 'other'" (OSCE 2013: 3).

Although the above-mentioned "root causes" (perceived deprivation, discrimination and residential segregation) may play a facilitative role in the radicalisation process, available research indicates that there are many more factors that increase the risk of involvement with radicalisation. These include push factors, that is circumstances that make a person more open to radical messages (e.g. group dynamics, recruitment, political events); pull factors, that is elements that influence the individual and "pull" her towards more attractive alternatives (e.g. personal experiences, charismatic leaders); and triggers, such as a dramatic event in the person's life (e.g. war, loss of a family member, an experienced act of discrimination), which may accelerate the process of radicalisation (IBZ 2014: 2). Finally, in the literature special emphasis is given to the role of political grievances as a basic explanatory factor driving radicalisation in Europe, especially with regard to Western foreign policy, the sense of discrimination created by the state and its agencies (e.g. law enforcement agencies), and the perceived humiliation of Muslims in conflict zones (Christmann 2012: 26; Ragazzi and Bechler 2016: 5).[206]

But what are the benefits of recruitment for young people? The literature suggests that membership in terrorist groups offers young people a variety of benefits/ inducements, which function as "pull factors". These include the following (the list is indicative only):

- ▶ social bonds, a sense of community/belonging, friendships, feelings of comradeship, a substitute "family";
- ▶ identity, increased status and self-esteem, respect, acceptance, recognition, purpose;
- ▶ outlets of frustration (fulfilling the desire for vengeance);

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206. It is important to stress also that much has been written about the significant role of the new ICTs in the recruitment of youth and the dissemination of propaganda. As relevant research suggests, terrorist groups target young people worldwide using different kinds of online media, such as internet sites – designed specifically for youth audiences – online magazines, colourful comics, video games, recorded audio speeches, explicit photo galleries, web forums, chat rooms, private e-mails and social media tools (OSCE 2015: 15; Bott et al. 2009: 55, 58-9). However, although ICTs indeed play a facilitating and enabling role, at least at the initial stages of the radicalisation process (creating bonds that are necessary for radicalisation, maintaining networks contacts, promoting radical ideology, etc.), it seems that violent action is unlikely to originate without previous face-to-face interaction (Bigo et al. 2014: 16; Christmann 2012: 30).

- ▶ a sense of risk and excitement in belonging to a "dangerous" (and more or less clandestine) group;[207]
- ▶ a sense of security and, in particular, protection against various enemies or perceived threats, as well as employment, money and solidarity (Bott et al. 2009: 15, 69; Christmann 2012: 27; Bjorgo 2005: 5-7; Curcio 2005: 53, 73).

What is interesting here is that the above-mentioned benefits of membership constitute factors "that could just easily lead youth to other types of … non-violent groups or networks" (Bott et al. 2009: 15). As we will see in the next section, some of the essential needs (personal, welfare and social) of young people that are met by extremist organisations can also be accommodated by the services of the youth work sector.

Preventing youth radicalisation: the role of youth work

As mentioned earlier, the EU, the Council of Europe and their member states have taken a variety of counter-radicalisation measures to prevent youth radicalisation. These include pre-emptive judicial powers (i.e. the extension of the pre-charge detention period), a broad range of administrative measures (i.e. stop and search powers) and "softer" approaches/policies that involve a wide range of actors including the youth work sector (Bigo et al. 2014: 7). In particular, softer approaches/policies "include the establishment of partnerships with community representatives, investment in social and neighbourhood projects, as well as mentoring schemes dedicated to youths 'at risk' of radicalisation" (ibid.: 27). Front-line actors, such as the police, kindergarten instructors, teachers, university professors, doctors, health/mental health professionals and youth workers are considered to play a special role within these partnerships, since they may come into direct contact with young people on the path to violent radicalisation.[208]

What is, however, the exact role of youth work in these partnerships and how can youth work contribute to the prevention of youth radicalisation?

As suggested earlier, one of the root causes of youth radicalisation is related to social exclusion (deprivation, discrimination, segregation). Considering that social exclusion "is a process of progressive multidimensional rupturing of the 'social bond' at the individual and collective level", youth work can set young people onto the trajectory towards inclusion by providing them with meaningful activities and recognition for positive behaviour and facilitating the creation of positive relationships (with peers and adults) (Dunne et al. 2014: 157). Positive bonding contributes not only to the well-being of young people but also to the promotion of positive

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207. According to Bjorgo, young persons "who have failed to establish a positive identity and status in relation to school, work, sports or other social activities and settings sometimes try to win respect by joining groups with a dangerous, intimidating image" (2005: 6).

208. Today, there is a great variety of projects, programmes and activities incorporated within counter-radicalisation across European countries, including the PREVENT strategy and the CHANNEL youth mentoring scheme in the UK, the EXIT programme in Sweden, and the STREET programme in the UK, etc. (ISD 2010).

civic engagement[209] and the prevention of anti-social behaviours (including violent radicalisation) (Dunne et al. 2014: 140).

In addition, youth work can offer to young people safer spaces for contact, discussion, pluralistic debate, negotiation and engagement among youth (but also between generations), as well as opportunities to raise the concerns that extremist organisations seek to exploit and react to events related to violent extremism (ISD 2010: 4; OSCE 2013: 3). Thus, young people, by interacting with individuals from other communities, can "channel [their] energy and sometimes [their] frustration and anger into positive alternatives to violent extremism such as civic and/or democratic engagement" (OSCE 2013: 13).[210] Arguably, all this goes hand in hand with intercultural learning and democratic citizenship (formal and non-formal) education, especially in the current context, with a fear of terrorist attacks and mass refugee flows increasingly generating racist attitudes among European citizens. In particular, youth work can help young people develop a range of very important intercultural skills and competences (i.e. critical thinking, intercultural awareness, cross-cultural communication, cultural relations competence, problem solving, conflict handling, cultural flexibility, etc.), which foster understanding, tolerance and respect among religious and cultural communities, but also combat xenophobia, racism and other similar phenomena (anti-Semitism, Islamophobia, etc.) (Giannaki 2015).

In the same vein, youth work can promote counter-narratives and alternative role models based on human rights, tolerance, interfaith understanding and democracy. Indeed, based on positive experiences from the engagement of young people in the prevention of other anti-social or risk behaviours (such as drug abuse) it seems that youth organisations can play an important role in countering discourse that drives youth towards violent radicalisation, especially because youth organisations have better access to hard-to-reach individuals compared to other front-line practitioners (OSCE 2015: 15; OSCE 2013: 5, 6). According to the OSCE, "an emphasis should be put on creating networks of youth from different online communities, supporting the development of counter narratives by young people, training them in non-violent response and hate online" (OSCE 2013: 6).[211]

Needless to say, youth workers (trainers, facilitators, etc.) should receive special training so that they can deal effectively with cases of ideological prejudice (that may drive youth towards violent radicalisation) and support young people in finding ways to boost their positive energy (OSCE 2013: 10, 12; IBZ 2014: 11).

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209. According to Kiwan, "citizenship as 'feeling' and citizenship as 'practice' are inextricably linked, and also mutually enhancing: just as a sense of belonging may promote participation, the experience of participation can enhance a sense of belonging" (2010: 184). Thus, by offering young people opportunities for meaningful social engagement, youth work enhances their feelings of belonging to the political community. In Balsano and Lerner's words, "people who have the opportunity to contribute to their own and others' positive development", by participating in meaningful activities, "will refuse involvement in radical movements and will choose … to protect ideologies supportive of their and their communities' successful development" (Balsano and Lerner 2005: 157).

210. It has been suggested that the experience of co-operation between different religious and cultural communities helps young people lose fear and gain trust (OSCE 2015: 19).

211. Maybe a change of language about youth radicalisation, drawing on its more positive aspects, could open the door to a more positive interaction with radical youngsters (IBZ 2014: 10-11).

Conclusion: youth work in times of (in)security

From the previous section it will have become apparent that youth work has the potential to contribute to the prevention of youth radicalisation in a number of ways. However, as already mentioned, the youth work sector is just one of many partners that take part in the current programmes of counter-radicalisation across Europe. Although the involvement of youth work in these partnerships has the potential to produce positive results, the youth work sector should be cautious as some aspects of this collaboration may be quite problematic.

In particular, most existing counter-radicalisation programmes are grounded in a predictive idea of security,[212] which requires early intervention to reduce opportunity, as well as an increase of surveillance even before a crime is committed (Zedner 2007: 262). But this heavy involvement of police and intelligence agencies in integration work, and most importantly the exploitation of relations of trust in society in order to make predictions, "reinforces suspicions on the part of the communities that they are under surveillance and undermines government messages about 'partnership'" (ISD 2010: 24). The issue of trust is crucial here. We know that a variety of professionals – including youth workers but also teachers, university professors, doctors, etc. – operate on the basis of trust, having a special relationship with the public groups that they work with (their students, patients, etc.); in fact, these professionals depend on those relations of trust in order to carry out their work properly (Ragazzi and Bechler 2016: 8). What is really problematic here is the fact that "the logic of counter-radicalisation is to ask those professionals to go precisely against the necessities of their profession which are to build trust, and to replace it with a logic of suspicion" (which is the logic of law enforcement and security professionals); if they do that, they risk undermining "the very basis of the relationship they must have with those they work with" (Ragazzi and Bechler 2016: 8). Bluntly put, if youth work does not keep a safe distance from the purposes of security, it risks jeopardising the fundamental condition of its existence and destroying its connections with youth.

Another problematic aspect of those partnerships is related to the stigmatisation of certain communities (mainly Muslim) as "problems", "suspects" or even "security threats" (Ragazzi and Bechler 2016: 9; ISD 2010: 23; Bigo et al. 2014: 28).[213] For instance, although it is not purely targeted at young Muslims, the CHANNEL mentoring scheme in the UK has created "a widespread feeling in the Muslim community that regular activities, such as political involvement in peace movements … when carried out

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212. According to Garland, in late modern societies, the general insecurity – which derives from the precariousness of social and economic relations – results in increased public risk consciousness and fear of crime (2001: 133). Since the capacity of governments to resolve large-scale economic and social problems is restricted, they search for other sources of legitimacy in order to demonstrate that they are still in control. Thus, their purpose becomes now the "micro-management of society", using laws and regulations, and an attempt to control the behaviour of the public (Waiton 2008: 343; Crawford 2009: 814). In this respect the pursuit of security implies now a shift from a post to a "pre-crime" society (Zedner 2007: 262; Crawford 2009: 814).

213. This is one more consequence of the predictive approach to security, within the framework of which risk shapes and provides the rationale for many preventive interventions, while preoccupation with individuals offenders relies upon the identification of suspect populations (Zedner 2007: 262, 265).

by young Muslims, trigger unnecessary referral to the CHANNEL programme" by culturally insensitive teachers and professionals (Bigo et al. 2014: 28). On top of criminalising the lawful political activism of youth, such discriminating practices also generate frustration within Muslim communities and, as a result, diminish public trust in the partners of counter-radicalisation programmes, including youth work agencies. Needless to say, the alienation of young Muslims can increase substantially the risk of making some individuals more vulnerable to violent radicalisation (Bigo et al. 2014: 28).

In addition, one should also reflect on the wider implications of the counter-radicalisation partnerships and, in general, on the implications of the close linkages and interactions between state and non-state organisations and actors in the area of security. What is important here is that these partnerships do not result in a withdrawal of the state; on the contrary, as Zedner has underlined, they extend "state control over what might otherwise be essentially private or voluntary crime control endeavours" (Zedner 2003: 163). But, most crucially, they promote informal crime control, which complements and extends the formal control of the criminal justice system (Garland 2001: 124).

To conclude, youth work has indeed an important role to play in the prevention of youth radicalisation and/or the promotion of positive radicalisation (lawful and democratic political activism). Nevertheless, as we have tried to show, youth work agencies should be very careful when taking part in counter-radicalisation programmes that are shaped and implemented mainly through the lens of security. In our view, in order to be successful in achieving its aims – integration, a sense of belonging, etc. – youth work should try to remain as distinct as possible from security-related interventions.[214]

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214. Indeed, as Bigo et al. have put it, "broadening the scope of 'soft' counter-radicalisation measures to what is considered traditionally community cohesion work … is detrimental to both objectives of counter radicalisation and fostering community cohesion" (2014: 32).

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Section III

Reflections on the recommendations made in the Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention

Chapter 29

Further exploring the common ground – Some introductory remarks

Hanjo Schild

The Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention was the main and official outcome of the event and was presented during the closing plenary session "Looking ahead" on 30 April 2015 (see Appendix 2). The aim of the organisers was to use this reference document to give new impetus to youth work policy and practice in Europe and to provide some orientations for a new European agenda and action plan on youth work for the years to come. It was, and is, addressed to the member states of the Council of Europe, multilateral organisations (the EU, the Council of Europe and the UN), other European institutions, and political structures concerned with young people at national, regional and local level, the youth work field and young people themselves.

The seven themes of the convention were tackled directly in thematic workshops seeking to establish "common ground" among participants who came from very different traditions of youth work policy and practice, and indirectly through field visits "under the hood" to local youth work projects. The seven themes that framed discussion at the convention were:

- ▶ elements of a European agenda for youth work;
- ▶ improving the quality of youth work;
- ▶ towards a knowledge-based approach;
- ▶ funding;
- ▶ towards common ground;
- ▶ cross-sectoral co-operation;
- ▶ civic dialogue.

Contributions from all participants form the backbone of the declaration, which was drafted by the Rapporteur-General for the convention and a team of editors,[215] based on the reports of rapporteurs from all of the working groups.

As a key message, across the themes, the declaration highlights why youth work is needed and what the added value of youth work is:

> Europe needs youth work! Investment in youth work is a necessary contribution to the development of a social Europe. Therefore the 2nd European Youth Work Convention is emphatic about the need for a "European Agenda for Youth Work", with its main aim to strengthen youth work in Europe.
>
> …
>
> Youth work is not a luxury but an existential necessity if precarious Europe is to effectively address its concerns about social inclusion, cohesion and equal opportunities, and commitment to values of democracy and human rights. Youth work is a central component of a social Europe. A failure to invest in youth work has three consequences. It is an abdication of responsibility to the next generation. It is a loss of opportunity to strengthen contemporary civil society throughout Europe. And finally, it weakens the potential for dealing effectively with some of the major social challenges (such as unemployment and extremism) of our time.

The declaration was welcomed by high-level speakers from member states, the EU, the Council of Europe and the UN in the closing session of the convention and later taken up by various stakeholders, including the Presidencies of the Council of the European Union as well as the Council of Europe, with the aim to ensure recognition of the value, positive impact and significance of youth work.[216]

The declaration was also taken up by the editorial team for this publication both in order to deepen reflections around youth work in general and also to further extend, concretely, reflections on the seven key themes. To this end, a number of contributions were made.

On the first theme of a "European Agenda for Youth Work", Peter Wootsch's chapter "Youth work in Europe – Europe in youth work (a blog)" explores how Europe relates to youth work and how youth work contributes to (the idea of) Europe. This demands taking into account the diversity, different concepts, ideas, and the various forms and practices of youth work as well as of Europe itself, with not just one definition and a

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215. The Rapporteur-General for the Convention was Howard Williamson, who was supported by five editors representing the key actors responsible for the promotion and development of youth work at European level, namely the Pool of European Youth Researchers (Nuala Connolly), the Network of National Agencies for the Erasmus+: Youth in Action programme (Reet Kost, Hans Georg Wicke), the Advisory Council on Youth of the Council of Europe (Marine Manucharyan), and the European Youth Forum (Jo Deman).

216. It was for example on the agenda of the 3388th Council meeting on Education, Youth, Culture and Sport on 18 and 19 May 2015 under "Other business": European declaration on youth work in the context of the Second European Youth Work Convention. The Council of the European Union was briefed by the Belgian delegation on the outcome of the Convention in the framework of the Belgian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (8491/1/15 REV 1).

variety of social, cultural, political, economic practices. His (provocative) conclusion is that "youth work settings must be a space for developing European patriotism and thus European citizens".

"Improving the quality of youth work" is the second theme. Given the complexity of the discussions on quality assurance three contributions reflect on various dimensions of "quality" youth work.

Jonas Agdur's chapter "Assuring the quality of youth work" pleads for a self-critical attitude and identifies some core principles that should guide youth work activities in order to meet quality criteria. He elaborates on a number of prerequisites to assuring quality and proposes a "business idea" for youth work.

For Gisèle Evrard Markovic and Darko Markovic, in their contribution "The present and the future of youth worker training in Europe", the training of youth workers is one of the key mechanisms to develop youth workers' competences and contribute to ensuring quality in and of youth work. The authors refer to some core principles of training in the youth field, with non-formal education as key, and they look beyond training to competence development of youth workers.

Marti Taru, in his chapter "A three-dimensional youth work evaluation model", is primarily concerned with the "measuring rod" and with the dimensions of (expected) outcomes of youth work. As the title suggests, he describes a general youth work evaluation model outlining three focal areas that he argues are useful for evaluating youth work activities: socialisation, participation and subjective well-being.

The third theme of the declaration "Towards a knowledge-based approach" is tackled by Helmut Fennes in "Towards knowledge-based youth work". His contribution also refers to quality issues of youth work, why a knowledge-based approach is essential and how it can be applied. In four steps he elaborates a concept for a knowledge base of youth work, with knowledge transfer identified as a subsequent requirement. Finally the (open) question of recognition in relation to increased quality and evidence-based approaches is put on the table.

Claudius Siebel addresses the fourth theme of "Funding". He starts his article on "Funding sustainable youth work" with a reflection on "youth work and the age-old question of money". He continues with the question of what "sustainable funding of youth work" constitutes and identifies different sources of funding, public/ government funding, private financing and European funding. Finally, he looks at the future of youth work funding.

Magda Nico engages with the sixth theme, "Cross-sectoral co-operation"; in her contribution "Youth work and cross-sectoral youth policy and co-operation: critical reflections on a puzzling relationship" she does not seek to present a single, definite understanding of the relationship between youth work and other policy sectors, instead reflecting on the diversity of meanings, practices and bridges found. She describes a "complex mosaic of meanings, possibilities and (reported) wills".

Jean-Claude Richez looks at the issue of "Participation and civic dialogue", considering the seventh theme "Civic dialogue" through the prism of public policy in France. His chapter starts with information on recent developments in the field of

youth participation and the state, before going on to look at the relevance of civic dialogue (from a youth perspective). He concludes with some observations on the role of regional and local authorities in youth participation policies.

To sum up, Section III probes more deeply into six of the seven themes of the declaration, sometimes drawing conclusions while at other times raising further questions and challenges. The fifth theme "Finding common ground" was, of course, the overarching thread of the convention and, as the declaration states:

> The Convention succeeded in taking some important further steps to find common ground for youth work in Europe. However, as youth work and its forms, conditions and practices in Europe remain so diverse, there is a need to continue work on exploring the common ground of youth work and its standards and concepts.

Finding common ground across the diversity of youth work remains a work in progress, but the convention represents an important beginning.

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Chapter 30

Youth work in Europe – Europe in youth work (a blog)

Peter Wootsch

Our key words for this publication are "youth", "youth work" and "youth policy". These are the marks on our compass of thoughts. The years 2014 and 2015 were special in the history of Europe, in terms of commemorations. The Great War broke out 100 years ago, four generations ago. In 2014, too, we had the 70th anniversary of D-Day, when the Allies landed in Normandy. Two hundred years ago, Wellington and Blücher defeated Napoleon at Waterloo, and in 2015 a great show was organised with thousands of citizens wearing the uniforms of the Grande Armée and the Royal Scots Greys. In 2014, Hungary marked 25 years since its accession to the Council of Europe, as the first country from the former Eastern Bloc. The same year also marked the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. These big moments of our history have shaped and reshaped our continent, and generations have lived through the realities defined by treaties in the aftermath of these wars. Our cognitive maps reflect these geo-political realities.

But "youth" were often not mentioned at these commemorations. We still favour the Great Man theory, wherein the actions of certain personalities determine our history. The long lists of casualties of these wars, made up almost entirely of young people, are left in the shadows. Do we learn from history in such commemorations? The history books of Europe are big compilations of the history of European nations, more recently also including the history of the European institutions. Yet little exists on the history of the citizen of Europe. Our present Europe is still not in the history books,

but these pages are being written now. Europe today is still under construction. We hope young Europeans will contribute positively to the pages of future history books.

Young people today have a totally different cognitive map of Europe and the world than that of previous generations, and they plan their future accordingly. So does their planning for higher education, which no longer stops at the border of a district, city or even country – it can extend to the whole continent or even the entire planet. More young people than ever before plan to pursue university studies abroad. Many young people are planning a working career abroad and may settle down in places where they have no previous ties. This new mapping is a reality that changes the perceptions of "belonging", "home" or "sense of citizenship". This is the result of a long and complicated political, socio-cultural and economic process. The young generation, the possible "target group" of youth work, adapts easily to these new realities and what's more, this is not just the privilege of well-educated, well-off, middle-class young people. Particularly in eastern Europe, we can see the migration of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods who may not have completed their education but who are beginning their job-seeking journey abroad.

Perceptions of Europe can range from those that idealise it as a "land of peace" to those that see it as a zone of conflicts of economic interests. Correspondingly, we have a range of supporters and detractors, from those who desire a united Europe to Eurosceptics who are against being "ruled" by Brussels. Europe is more than you think; perceptions of Europe depend on our cultural, political, economic and social positions, our levels of education and access to information, and on individual personal experiences.

The ideal Europe may be that of a land of tolerance, acceptance and co-operation, but is it possible? How does one create a European community where the nationalities have their own values yet share a common understanding? How does Europe relate to youth work and how can youth work contribute to this idea of Europe? The youth work that we know is diverse, colourful and exists in various forms, like Europe itself. Just as there is no generally agreed definition of youth work, so there is not just one definition of "Europe". The contemporary European reality remains a diversity of realities, concepts, and the social, cultural, political and economic practices to be found in parliamentary democracies. There is a growing awareness that the creation of European institutions did not automatically involve and convince citizens of the European idea. So youth work is just one, albeit important, tool to associate young citizens with European values.

Today, European citizens are not so optimistic about the idea of a "united Europe". The effect of the latest financial crises and the debates around the question of keeping Greece within the Eurozone has had a huge negative impact. The flow of refugees and migrants has once again challenged the European idea of a common space of solidarity. European governments are working against European unity and their citizens are being affected by the pressure of the situation as much as powerful nationalistic rhetoric. Prejudice, hate speech and anti-Europeanism are rising. The fear of terror is misleading us, and the atmosphere is not conducive to a Europe as the land of ideas, although it remains the land of hope and promise for

those coming to the continent. It is not governments, but the citizens who can make Europe stronger in these hard times.

Entering Europe through an open door: a fairy tale

Once upon a time … in summer 1996 in the Hungarian town of Kecskemét, in the middle of the Great Plains, a training course for young people was held. The participants were members of an international exchange programme, and came from the UK, Denmark, Hungary, Germany and Romania (the children of Hungarian families from Transylvania). We, the Hungarian trainers, had little experience of working with a multicultural group, but we had built up both positive and negative experiences from previous international trainings and work with colleagues from western Europe.

We had lived and worked in a country that was learning how to co-operate with other countries in a "new" Europe. Hungary had been a member of the Council of Europe since 1990 and in 1994 applied for membership of the EU. Hungarian citizens had just about started to gather their own experiences through free travel and all the polls showed clearly that joining the EU was one of the most important political agendas, together with NATO membership. In this socio-political atmosphere we, as youth workers, had also started to learn how to work in an international environment.

In that training course our aims were simple, yet ambitious: to get those kids together as one group, with participants acting together, modelling Europe. We had chosen a little brainstorming activity to trigger the "creation" of an ideal European continent. Participants worked in small groups to answer the question: "What did Europe give to the world?" This might sound banal, but those familiar with Monty Python might have found this approach to be quite appropriate. The instructions were very simple, concentrating on the brainstorming without manipulating the ideas. We were curious: what sort of ideas would come out? The participants started by laughing about silly ideas. Then someone mentioned "football" and someone else continued with "water polo". Somebody said "light athletics", another mentioned the Olympic Games. "The map of the world", came next, and the names of great explorers jumped out: Columbus, Marco Polo, Captain Cook, Jens Munk the Dane, Magellan. Then those associated with the Enlightenment followed: Voltaire, Rousseau, Goethe. Participants uttered the names of scientists like Kepler, Newton, Einstein, inventors like Gutenberg, the Lumière brothers, Herr Porsche. And they mentioned books, cars, airplanes, films.

The vivid discussion paused at a certain point – "democracy" was mentioned. As in the Monty Python film,[217] the response was, "Oh, yes." "Parliamentarianism" and "free elections", "human rights" and "citizens' rights" followed. Somebody knew that the US cannot be a member of the Council of Europe, because it has not abolished the death penalty. The group work reached its peak. We had opened the floor for further discussion in order to classify this huge range of ideas, based mainly on the knowledge participants had picked up from their schools, through history lessons directed by curricula that regulate the content of learning in many European countries. The discussion went on; we felt that the group was ready to work together.

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217. *Life of Brian* (1979).

At that moment a Danish participant said: "What did Europe give to the world? Me! It was me, who was given by Europe to the world."

Everyone laughed, and we trainers had a feeling of accomplishment. This young person had given us the most important key to furthering our learning process with the group. We had arrived at a point from where the educational journey could move to constructing a concept of a social environment based on acceptance and tolerance, creating a solid basis to design common tasks and put them into practice. In the following days we worked together in a changed atmosphere. One of the youngest participants was very shy and reserved, and at the beginning was always sitting at the side of the room, in the safest corner, without communicating much with the others. He never took off his baseball cap, which cast a shadow on his face, covered his eyes, and hid his emotions. It took three days for him to take it off and suddenly his face opened up; we saw his eyes for the first time. The boy started to talk and on the fourth day he asked to take the floor in a plenary session and expressed his opinion. This is one of the magic, encouraging moments, familiar to those working for and with youth: young people leave their shadows and come out into the light of a community.

The self-confidence displayed by our participant was shared by the others. Emancipation through involvement, strengthened by the social surrounding, and learning new things from each other in a situation created by a supportive group. Europe cannot be strong without strong citizens.

Being in Europe with youth workers

Five books have been published on the history of youth work in Europe. These are compilations of articles covering a diverse range of viewpoints, with socio-pedagogical traditions and innovations seeking to address social and political challenges against a historical backdrop of transition periods and economic crisis. The contributions reflect not only the evolution of the professionalisation of youth work, but also the history of youth in Europe. This helps us understand the changing social status of youth over the decades. Indeed, youth work is as diverse as the European societies in which it takes place. A key speaker at the 1st European Convention on Youth Work (Ghent, 2010) described it as "different youth works in different Europes".

Youth work is a European phenomenon, something that Europe "gave" to the world. Reflecting on the history of youth work helps us understand its development in European societies; certain contributions in the series explain what it means for such European institutions as the Council of Europe and the EU. We also learn that youth work has had very different stories in eastern and western Europe. This was not simply as a result of democratic or communist contexts, but also how those policies considered the younger generation. In the western democracies the educational and social systems focused on the idea of "good citizens", whereas the Eastern communist systems focused on youth as "good subjects". Pluralistic democracies versus monolithic political structures, multiparty systems in political life versus a single, unquestioned ruling party, a free and multifaceted civil society with various institutions versus a single, central youth organisation: these differences necessarily led to contrasting modes of defining the role of young people in society. If in western Europe youth

work served to integrate young people into society, in eastern Europe youth work served to support the regime in place.

Therefore youth work in its truest sense developed in western Europe – a fact that we often forget. It would be very interesting to study through what paths our colleagues in eastern Europe came to learn and absorb the ideas and methodologies of youth work. What kind of knowledge from former times remained relevant, and what changed when they encountered colleagues from western Europe? What models influenced the structural changes that framed their work? We know little about these processes within our colleagues' professional lives, whose biographies would be useful to understand that process of integration and professional emancipation.

More than a quarter of a century since the fall of the Berlin Wall these differences are more structural than professional. Integration is a process that needs time and space as much as methodology. We know that certain European countries have robust youth laws (in some Scandinavian countries we can speak about the third generation of youth laws) and functioning institutions providing a sustainable home for youth work. We know also that in other European countries youth work is marginalised by the state and finds a home mainly in the work of NGOs. In some states specific legislation concerning youth exists, but does not refer to youth work. Regarding professionalisation, too, there is a wide range – some countries treat youth work as a profession relying on educational qualifications, regulations and defined professional agendas, granting it space in the public sector, while others provide no specific qualifications for those seeking to become youth workers and no status at all in the public sector, indicating a general lack of support for youth work. Working conditions for youth workers thus exhibit more diversity than we might expect. Nevertheless, the 1st and 2nd European Conventions on Youth Work showed clearly that there is a common ground (Williamson 2015) with regard to an understanding of the importance of youth work as a socio-pedagogical practice whose role is to help young people to integrate and participate in society. The conferences in Ghent and Brussels have shown clearly that the process of emancipation of youth workers from eastern Europe has been completed and the process of finding common ground must now be followed by a process of defining common future projects.

Generally speaking, learning is an action very familiar to all of us, and it is something that, increasingly, children come into contact with from an early age. From the late 1990s, we have been hearing about changes in the pedagogical curricula of kindergartens, which are no longer places where children are merely taken care of while their parents are at work. If learning begins early, then, the introduction and programming of "life-long learning" means that the learning process does not stop. Learning is not limited by biological age, and it is not the society-supported privilege of young people any longer. It is a privilege of the citizens of modern societies. But how do we learn such things as "democracy", "human rights", "the rule of law", "community", "society" or "Europe"? The answer from the perspective of youth work seems easy, even banal: to practise it.

It is well established that how we learn in our physical and social environments is a combination of non-formal and informal as well as active and participatory learning. Our first steps on the street, the ways in which "our adults" coach us, reflect our own

learning actions, all referring to classical youth work methodologies of producing informal and non-formal or community learning. We know that learning about such concepts as "the community", "co-operation in groups" and "leadership and management" is more effective through informal and non-formal learning than through more formal, teacher knowledge-centred education. Our social commitments, and the level and quality of our civic participation are learned in informal and non-formal ways. Youth work comprises those things learned from each other, through processes, and by common praxis and interactions with others.

Whether youth work belongs more to the educational or social sector is a dilemma stemming from the fact that the "principle of youth work struggles with the principles of professionalization" (Lorenz 2009a). These arguments are most likely to surface in discussions about the recognition of youth work. Many youth workers would be happy to have a stable position on the payroll of the state, enjoying a social status not unlike that of a teacher, a medical doctor or a police officer. Youth workers continue to reflect on their social-pedagogical functions and the methodology of youth work. It is its practice that makes youth work visible in societies (Coussée 2010), as a complex praxis in a wide variety of forms. The challenge is to retain this variety, which is what feeds into youth work as a very special human action that focuses pedagogical and social processes on the basis of the participation of young people. We have to continue our efforts for more recognition and more support of youth work, of course, but we should not give up on the principle behind one of its definitions: "youth work is a socio-pedagogical action whose main objective is to provide opportunities for young people to shape their own future" (Lauritzen, in Ohana and Rothemund 2008).

Comparative studies of youth policies in Europe reflect also on the paradox of youth work, as described by Coussée (2008): "youth work that works is not accessible and accessible youth work does not work." Ultimately, we could conclude that access to youth work that works is enveloped in a cloud of questions about structures, support, legitimation and budgets. Many young Europeans still lack access to youth work that works. And this is where there needs to be a fight for the recognition of youth work.

Youth work and European ideas

Youth and Europe. There may be those who will protest that everything is being addressed to young people. But those who have been involved in the youth field for some time may recognise that this – working with young people – is the oldest way to tackle our broader social problems. Indeed, party and state propaganda has been targeting youth for decades, in war and peace, for the purposes of both the Right and the Left. Do we pay sufficient attention to the youth policies cooking in the dark corners of political laboratories? Do we recognise when political parties invoke "youth" as a source of (their) national pride, once again? We must remain alert to these ways of tying "youth" to many masts: today Europe needs to engage "youth" not as political cannon fodder or future workers on the labour market, but as committed European citizens.

It may be banal to repeat this, but we are living in a new Europe. This is a continent that keeps everything in its memory, absorbs all experiences, but is always ready to

learn from them. We should be very proud of our cultural heritage, our museums, our libraries, our films – and the way we have preserved and catalogued culture so our citizens can access them easily. We can be very proud of our citizens, who live by their values and help us believe that it is possible to live in a normal world. Europe is more than we think. Its influence worldwide, through the political, social, cultural and economic spheres, is greater than we think. We are not paying enough attention to the things that we should be proud of that are essentially European, rather than what is elaborated through nation states.

Youth work helps to inculcate "European patriotism" and youth workers should not shy away from this. Patriotic Europeans are needed for those times when Europe loses its way. Sometimes, I feel we are still exploring the notion of "European citizenship" rather than working on a more regular basis around the phenomenon of European patriotism.

Youth work is about values. To recall the words of the Hungarian philosopher Éva Ancsel: "Values are invisible like the wind. From the flutter of leaves you know there is wind. And you realize values through the actions of people." Youth work targets values in all its forms. To have team spirit in action, to have common understanding in a training course with young people, to establish a milieu welcoming marginalised youngsters that gives them back dignity – all of that is about values. Working with and for young people in a participatory learning process is about learning and the practice of values.

Other issues are probably a bit more complicated. Many experts talk about the post-1989 period as the "end of history": the "struggle for ideological supremacy, which drove history and politics for at least the past 150 years, is supposed now to have come to an end" (Lorenz 2009b: 21). But youth as a cultural-sociological construction took the lead at the beginning of this new era. The nature of mass media and the world of the internet has been shaped and ruled by young people, not least in the boom of new communication technologies and social media that is driven by a new generation of young multi-billionaires. What sort of social commitments and ideologies do these industry leaders have? If the new ICTs, which have affected nearly all areas of our lives, represented a revolution of young people, why are we not happy to see this? Because we still see inequality and poverty, growing monopolies and an enormous concentration of money in the hands of a few, coupled with too much information and too little understanding. Youth work is affected very much by these challenges. Smartphones and social media have such power over our private lives that youth work has to take this into consideration.

Mission statements or ethical standards for youth workers include values that correspond well with what we call "European values". From that point of view, we should use "European" as an adjective as much as a noun, as it means different things. It means pan-European (namely a "European agenda") but it also means "quality": quality of personal and social life, quality of community life, quality of participatory democracy, and quality of participation in social, cultural, political and economic life. Youth work must concentrate on this holistic approach, and should provide a space for developing European patriotism and thus European citizenship.

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Chapter 31

Assuring the quality of youth work

Jonas Agdur

The word "quality" has very positive connotations, but we must never forget that there can be both high and low quality. During my 37 years in the youth work sector, of which 18 were in direct "hands-on" youth work, I have seen a lot of both and I truly believe that a self-critical attitude is essential when we are to work with quality assurance and the further development of youth work.

The alternative, not engaging in continuous development, is in fact a sure way to fall behind and be out-dated in a changing society. Attractive youth work is curious, creative, provocative and eager to explore new possibilities. It has the spirit it wants to convey to young people and the urge to develop together with them.

But development, whether it is personal or professional, also asks for self-awareness if you are not to lose yourself and end up in positions or behaviours that you will later regret. You need to look at yourself in the mirror and be aware of the "I" you want to develop: your needs and delimitations, your strengths and weaknesses, your basic identity.

Finding yourself is never easy, and having 500 people doing it together does not make it any easier. The 2nd Youth Work Convention was a huge effort in this direction and was in itself a great manifestation of the youth work sector's will to develop. The final report (Council of Europe 2015) in turn captures very well both the spirit and the discussions of the convention.[218]

However, by doing this, it at the same time mirrors what I consider to be the basic problem if we are to be successful in our search for ourselves – whether we call it "common ground", "the role of youth work" or something else. What I will argue is that we, in the report and in general, tend to hide the forest behind the trees and that we need a more structured way to talk about youth work if we are to gain stronger recognition. It is not that I do not more or less agree with every single statement – I do – but I think we have to change perspective and organise our arguments in another way if we are to be able to give a clear and consistent picture of youth work, both to ourselves and to the world around us. I will also make some suggestions on how this could be done and how it relates to quality assurance. In order to know how good we are we must start by knowing who we are.

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218. All quotes in the chapter are from this report, unless otherwise noted.

A new way of talking

The report, as with the majority of documents concerning youth work, contains long lists showcasing the broad scope and diversity of youth work. It is "advancing democracy, human rights", "promoting peace building, tolerance", "dealing with social and personal ambiguities", "developing soft skills competences", "enabling transitions to 'successful' adulthood", and much more.

At the same time the report acknowledges that this constitutes a problem:

> Within this diversity, which in some respects should be celebrated, the quest for common ground may appear to be elusive, yet it is an imperative task if the role of youth work is to be better defined, its distinctive contribution communicated, and its connections with, and place within, wider policy priorities clarified.

So how do we move forward? How can we understand and talk about youth work in a way that provides a relevant and fruitful perspective on diversity, not defining youth work through its diversity but instead defining diversity through youth work? In order to do this we must start by making clear why the current way of talking about it is so problematic.

First of all, we use too many words. If we want to make youth work recognisable to politicians, the public and young people we need give them the essence in short and distinctive sentences.

Secondly, when we are talking about the contributions/outcomes/effects of youth work they are all very positive, but at the same time we all know (as do politicians) that there may also be youth work with negative effects. We risk losing credibility and undermining the incentive for quality development if all youth work is "by definition" positive.

Thirdly, the sheer range of terms and perspectives does not make things clearer. On the contrary, it creates confusion and begs the question of how they actually relate to each other. It demonstrates a lack of structure and priorities – youth work is diverse, but in what way are all these forms part of the same machinery? Furthermore, this signals anxiety. Is youth work diverse for a reason or simply because we do not dare to rule something out as not being youth work? If youth work should be recognisable it must have clear delimitations. What is it that youth work does not do? And why not?

All this leads me to conclude that if we want to enhance the recognition of youth work and create a basis for further development we must start talking about it in another way. What do we actually mean when we say that we need a "common ground"? A common definition? Common methods? Common aims? All of the above?

The function of youth work

We have to start by acknowledging that there is a difference between what youth work is and what it might lead to. Because if youth work, as often stated, is to meet the needs and interests of young people it will surely lead to different things depending on where we work and which group of young people we work with.

We must also acknowledge that it might lead to all the things listed, but so might activities delivered by, for example, school or social services. School might "enable transitions to 'successful' adulthood" and social services might deal with "social and personal ambiguities". So what is specific to youth work?

My conclusion is that our first basic step must be to define youth work in terms of what function it is supposed to fulfil for young people.

Let me draw a parallel: a pilot (whose professional identity is both clear and highly recognised) is not defined by his or her concrete actions (the controls he or she operates), nor by the destination or the vehicle used (airplane, helicopter, balloon), nor by the eventual cargo carried. A pilot is defined by his/her function: to move something from point A to point B through the air. This kind of definition also makes it obvious when a person ceases to be a pilot and becomes something else. When your journey is going to be by bus you do not call the person driving it a pilot, whatever his or her education or title might be.

Even more important is that this way of defining an activity opens up an appropriate and meaningful discussion on quality and how it could be assessed and improved. The essence of quality and what defines it is how functional something is in relation to what is supposed to be achieved. So, if we want to know how good something is (its quality), we first have to know what function it is supposed to fulfil.

In accordance with this my suggestion would be that the function of youth work is to stimulate and support activities that contribute to young people's personal and social development through non-formal and informal learning.

The core principles

The next step would be to state the core principles that govern and must guide the activities defined if they are to function in a successful way. (In the case of the pilot it is gravity and the laws of aerodynamics.) For this discussion I would suggest that the most important ones are that youth work should:

- respond to the needs, interests and experiences of young people as perceived by themselves;
- be based on young people's voluntary and active participation, engagement and responsibility;
- be designed, delivered and evaluated together with young people.

    (European Commission 2015)

So far this goes well with three statements in the Declaration of the 2nd Youth Work Convention: "engagement with it needs to remain on a voluntary basis"; "As youth work is mainly based on non-formal and informal learning"; and "Participation is one of the main principles of youth work." The problem is, as noted earlier, that these are more or less lost in the long lists of various statements.

To me, the above-mentioned definition/function and these core principles are what together constitute youth work. Put this way it is also made clear that youth work is a process of active participation and learning. It is a process that will have various

outcomes depending on the needs and interests of the young people we work with. Some will become entrepreneurs, others will become revolutionaries. This also means that these outcomes cannot be evaluated or measured as such, but can only be seen in relation to the specific process producing them.

I strongly believe that looking at youth work as a specific process aimed at filling a specific function opens up a new way of enhancing both the quality and the recognition of youth work. As the report from the 2015 Convention states:

> Attention should be given to outcomes and impact where they can be measured, but youth work should continue to focus on the process and the needs of young people, remaining outcomes informed and not outcomes led. The Convention emphasised that youth work contributes to the development of attitudes and values as much as more tangible skills and competences.

The process is the outcome!

What I am suggesting is that the process should be seen as the outcome. This means that we must argue that a good process, characterised by participation and non-formal learning, will contribute to the personal and social development of the young people that take part.[219] The quality of youth work will subsequently depend on how well it meets the core principles.

This approach might seem strange but it is actually quite well established in quality development. If we take the core principle of participation we could define it as a process in five steps and set up criteria (indicators) that we want the process to fulfil. We could for example say that young people should be actively engaged in:

- formulating the idea/aim of the activity;
- organising and planning the activity;
- preparing the activity;
- carrying out the activity;
- evaluating the activity.

When young people participate they should perceive that:

- the activity meets their interests;
- they own the process;
- they are responsible for the process and its outcomes;
- they contribute to the process;
- they learn.

The more these criteria are met, the higher the degree of participation, and thus the quality.

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219. This also has strong support in health and resilience research. See for example Aaron Antonovsky, *Unraveling the Mystery of Health: How People Manage Stress and Stay Well*, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 198.

Assuring quality

The above-mentioned criteria also imply that we cannot evaluate youth work through different forms of self-assessment or peer assessment alone. We will have to ask young people how they take part and how they perceive their participation (not asking them how happy they are, but if they actually are participating and learning). This will in turn strengthen the credibility of our evaluation.

A more important point, however, is that we cannot only look at the quality of the process of "youth work practice" if we want to develop youth work. We must also look at the quality of prerequisites and work methods. One of the most important prerequisites is youth work policy and the concrete targets/objectives that are set up for youth work. Quality would here mean that these objectives actually comply with the definition and the core principles of youth work – that they are relevant and possible to achieve through youth work.

Another important prerequisite is the existence of an adequate and well-functioning system for gathering knowledge on how well the process meets the criteria/indicators we have set up for it, that is to say a system for evaluation. This is in fact crucial if we want to "build a knowledge base for youth work in Europe", meet the need for "appropriate forms of scrutiny, inquiry and assessment of youth work practice and concepts in Europe" and create "mechanisms for the development of a reflective practice in Europe".

One final example of a vital prerequisite is of course youth worker competence. But what basic competences youth workers need to have is mainly determined by what function they are to fulfil, not by what concrete activities they are to take part in (which will definitely vary over time and in relation to the young people they work with). To me, this once again demonstrates the importance and the benefit of defining youth work in terms of its function and not in terms of its concrete actions.

The core competence of youth workers should therefore be the ability to stimulate and support participatory processes and non-formal learning. The competences they might need besides this will vary over time and in relation to the different needs of young people, and must be gained through continuous competence development. But first of all, youth workers should be coaches and process managers supporting young people to gain the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need in order to realise their activities, ideas and visions for the future.

In my view, the current debate puts too much focus on competence development and training of youth workers and too little focus on the prerequisites that need to be at hand if this competence is to be used in a constructive and efficient way. This seriously risks putting all the responsibility for the quality of youth work on youth workers, not making clear that this is also a responsibility for the political level that goes beyond mere financing – they must also provide meaningful and realistic objectives and conditions for the activities they finance. Quality development must look at the youth work context as a whole and have a systematic and systemic approach.

A business idea

One last question has to be answered: what allows an organisation to develop new solutions and at the same time maintain a clear and easily recognisable identity? If we look outside the youth work sector for a more general answer to this question we might take the company IKEA as an example.

If you work at IKEA, you know exactly what kind of final product you are supposed to contribute to. You do not suggest the production of a readymade 100-kilo baroque bureau. And if you are a customer you know exactly what to expect, and it is not a baroque bureau. The expectations from both sides are clear and spell "flat packages" – IKEA is recognised and successful because of this business idea.

My conclusion is that we do not make youth work recognisable and possible to "sell" only by having a definition, or a common ground; we also need a clear business idea. A clear business idea is at the same time what makes an organisation develop in a creative way, by not telling people what to do but what to achieve.

This business idea must of course match the definition and the core principles. My suggestion would therefore be that the business idea of youth work should be to "stimulate and support activities that build on and require the active engagement and responsibility of young people."

Conclusion

If we succeed in defining youth work in the way I suggest it will also mean that we will no longer have to argue for youth work on the basis of its specific effects, such as employability or less drug abuse. At the same time it makes it possible for us to be outcome focused – which I think is both reasonable and necessary in an activity financed by taxpayers' money.

To conclude, I think[220] we should:

▶ define youth work by the function it is supposed to fulfil for young people;

▶ start arguing for the participatory learning process as the "aim and anticipated outcome";

▶ formulate the core principles on which this process relies and use it as a "framework of quality standards for youth work responsive to national contexts";

▶ set quality criteria/indicators related to the process and start assessing to which degree they are met.

Finally, looking at IKEA; what youth work most of all needs is not a common ground but a common business idea.

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220. Even if these reflections and ideas are strictly my own responsibility many of them have been developed through my work in the European Expert Group on Youth Work Quality Systems. The report this group produced (European Commission 2015) has now been turned into a practical handbook on quality development, *Improving Youth Work – your guide to quality development*, that could be downloaded at https://ec.europa.eu/youth/news/2017/improving-youth-work-your-guide-quality-development_en.

Chapter 32

The present and the future of youth worker training in Europe

Gisèle Evrard Markovic and Darko Markovic

I t is hard to imagine a process of capacity building for youth workers that does not involve training. For many years, the training of youth workers has been one of the key mechanisms to develop their competences and contribute to ensuring the quality of youth work, both at local and international levels.

For more than 40 years, the Council of Europe has organised and supported activities to train a large number of youth workers in the management of international youth projects as well as issues such as human rights, cultural diversity, youth participation and social cohesion with their youth groups. It is estimated that about 5 000 young people pass through the European Youth Centres of the Council of Europe every year, and that the European Youth Foundation has, to date, supported projects involving about 370 000 young people.

At the level of the EU, considering the several generations of youth programmes that have taken place, we are talking about hundreds of thousands of youth workers who have been trained to competently implement programmes and address issues related to the main objectives of these programmes. In the Youth in Action programme (2007-13) alone about 300 000 youth workers participated in training projects implemented by NGOs, national agencies and SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres.

Other institutional players have also put significant emphasis on training. In 1998, when the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership was formed, it was initially called the Partnership on Youth Worker Training, with the ultimate goal of raising standards in youth worker training at European level and defining quality criteria for such training. The interest of stakeholders and their focus on training in the youth field has been particularly emphasised in Bridges for Training (Bruges, 2001), an event that undoubtedly contributed to providing visibility and a strong impetus for further developments in this area.

Having said all this, it is no surprise that the Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention stresses that training is a crucial element to support the development of quality youth work. But the question is: what kind of "crucial element" should it be in order to respond to the tectonic social, cultural and technological changes affecting young people's lives and changing – or at least having an impact on – youth work realities? The challenge goes beyond picturing the present trends; it is about sensing where the "emerging future" of youth worker training will be in the years to come.

It is with this in mind that we invite you to join us with an open mind and open heart in this rather practitioner-oriented critical reflection about the present and future of youth worker training.

Only quality can support quality: can we [really] do what we say?

The Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention also states that irrespective of who delivers youth work – a paid or voluntary worker – delivery has to be of high quality. It goes without saying that the training of youth workers should thus be of a high quality itself.

The discussion about quality in training is not new on the youth agenda, even though it has surely gained momentum. The main actors in the field have taken a series of steps towards defining and ensuring quality in different ways. For instance, the Youth Department of the Council of Europe has defined its own quality standards for its education and training activities. The SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre has drafted a competence model for trainers working at international level. The European Youth Forum has developed a Framework for Quality Assurance of Non-Formal Education and a supporting manual for youth organisations. The list could go on and on, punctuated with numerous "quality indicators", "quality standards", "quality tools", "quality measurements" and other terms that mark almost every publication tackling quality, youth work and training today.

In addition, "training for trainers" and related activities are implemented with the intention to further support trainers' competence development and their ability to deliver high-quality training for youth workers. In other words, the field is becoming more professionalised, requirements for trainers are going up, and the pressure to perform is constantly increasing. But even then we can ask ourselves: what about quality?

In a comprehensive study on this topic, Fennes and Otten (2008) pointed out that the discourse on quality in training and non-formal education in the youth field is older than we may think: quality standards and criteria have been implicitly and explicitly discussed and applied in practice for many years in this field, although sometimes not under the label of "quality". The authors also stress that the discourse on quality is often characterised by fear – primarily of practitioners – that measures and instruments for quality assurance and control will over-formalise non-formal education and therefore take away its core quality aspect: its "non-formality".

Today, one can say that there has been a shift in this discourse towards more trust and a shared understanding of the need to be more explicit about quality in training. This comes both from institutional pressure, as well as internal pressure within the circle of practitioners, who are demanding more recognition of their work. Fennes and Otten (2008) have drafted a list of possible "quality standards" or principles that could be applied to this end. What comes to our attention is that among the other rather "technical" and "methodological" standards, one of the key principles asks that the activities be underpinned by the core principles and practices of non-formal education. And this is possibly what brings us to the core of the very notion of quality in training and youth activities: the principles of non-formal education.

Principles for training in the youth field (Fennes and Otten 2008)

– Learner-centredness
– Transparency
– Agreement between trainers and learners on learning objectives
– Content and methodology
– Confidentiality
– Voluntarism of learners
– Participation of learners
– Ownership of the learning is with the learners
– Democratic values and practices

The question here is therefore: how much can we really do what we say in relation to, for example, focusing on the needs of learners or adopting "learner-centredness", as among the core principles of quality in non-formal education? Let us imagine a situation. There is a project proposal for training on topic X, which provides a general idea, describes the main intentions of the organisers and how they wish to approach the course, but without specific content or a detailed programme for the activity. It is simply stated that the whole of the content and concrete objectives will be developed on the spot with those participating. How likely is that project to be funded? From another angle, how likely is that kind of training to be appealing for potential participants? My guess is that the answer to the first question is "very low" and to the second is "very high". In other words, can we really do what we say? How far are we actually ready to apply "learner-centredness" as one of the key principles of our activities? We certainly tend to adjust our programmes based on the group's realities and needs, skipping some sessions or adding others. But when was the last time you witnessed truly learner-centred training?

From learning to act to learning to learn (and back)

In a film about the non-violent struggle led by Martin Luther King,[221] there is a scene focusing on the training of black activists, who are preparing to enter cafes and bars previously reserved only for white people. Here, training is shown to have had an empowering role by working on the participants' motivation, attitudes, emotions and skills. For years, training activities for youth workers at European level had a similar

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221. Steve York's *A force more powerful. Part 1* (2000).

"flavour" and purpose: to provide a strong motivational boost for youth workers so they could make a real impact on young people's lives. They were equipped with new skills and new methods and made to feel as though they were part of a larger community. And in all those training activities, based on the principles of non-formal education, the learning process has always been present.

But it is only relatively recently that the learning process as such has been explicitly brought to the attention of participants during activities. Following calls for enhanced reflection not only about what we are learning, but also how we are learning, this has been underlined in many contemporary training activities. The initial drivers for such a shift were numerous, and included initiatives for better recognition of learning outcomes based on self-assessment and the assumption that being aware of one's own learning process enhances the ability to facilitate the learning processes of others (supporting young people's learning in youth work, etc.). There is also a larger argument, which emphasises that in this rapidly changing world, the best way to stay in touch is to be equipped with the necessary competences and be aware of the learning behind them. One of the key competences to achieve this is that which enables us to direct and support our own learning: learning to learn. This is valid for the world of personal development, but also for the world of work and professional growth. In a sense, learning to learn is now considered one of the "key survival tools" for the future.

Without challenging the importance of learning to learn for the future of human beings in today's and tomorrow's Europe (and beyond), it is fair to critically reflect on the possible over-emphasis of this aspect in youth worker training. This is not a call to return to the old days and traditional ways, but rather a look at the future of youth worker training in the spirit of the very purpose of youth work as such. Peter Lauritzen once said "the main objective of youth work is to provide opportunities for young people to shape their own futures" (Ohana and Rothemund 2008). If so, the critical point here is about whether we are considering shaping more individual (or individualistic) futures, or rather giving a boost to young people to play a transformational role and shape future societies in order to deal with current global challenges in a more sustainable, interconnected and globally responsible way. Of course, at this point we might have only a vague sense of what the future might look like, but we might hope to equip the "future generation" (in our youth organisations, youth clubs and projects) with the competences needed to take the "right" decisions when the time comes. In that sense, adjusting the words of Paolo Freire on education to youth work, we could say that youth work and youth worker training are maybe not changing the world, but they are changing people who can change the world. And if you take the time to think about that and to embrace the idea, it is worth reflecting on what other "future shaping" competences, apart from readiness to learn, are important to focus on when considering our youth worker training programmes.

Competence development: thinking beyond training

By now, we all know that learning does not happen only in classrooms and school buildings. And it is similarly unreasonable to claim that it happens only in training.

In addition to that a rather philosophical question that trainers and educators could ask themselves is: can we really train people or should we rather "just" facilitate the process of their learning? This also brings us to reflections about the real potential and limitations of training as a "tool" for competence development.

Following the statement from the 2nd European Youth Work Convention to develop more effective training strategies for youth workers' competence development, and in line with the above, the question to ask is whether training itself is the only or the best possible way forward.

As noted above, there is already a visible trend of focusing on participants' learning processes, which in return requires the trainers to reflect on and reconsider their role. However, we also have to think about how we can approach the process of competence development in a more holistic way, thinking beyond training as an immediate answer.

In other words, it is important to raise awareness about the need to take into consideration all the different sources of learning when planning competence development strategies. We have to think outside the training box and first contemplate the whole spectrum of possibilities that may allow youth workers to develop their competences. Only once this has been done can we reflect on whether training is required, and what kind of training would be most suitable.

Several attempts have already been made to combine training with other means such as coaching, mentoring or blended learning. However, going beyond the standard trainer job requirements and including all these new elements confronts us with the question: how much, by the simple fact of being a trainer, are we actually equipped to do individual work or facilitation in an online environment? How much are trainers expected to be "all-round players" able to properly fulfil all these new roles? This is also a question to be asked of those responsible for the capacity building of trainers in their organisations, which should ensure an adequate variety of opportunities for trainer competence development to assist them in dealing with learning.

Fast to react, but slow to change. Or?

One of the key advantages of non-formal education in comparison to its bigger siblings, schools and universities, is that it is more responsive and adaptive to the changing realities and needs of its target groups and societies at large. We also like to see ourselves as a field of innovation and creativity in education, and often hope that one day the formal system will "become like us", and work and adjust for the benefit of all learners who are currently struggling in unsuitable learning environments.

At this point, we may have to turn our attention from looking outside to looking back at ourselves. For instance, it is quite an interesting exercise to get into the archives of the European Youth Centre in Strasbourg and dive into the documents on training and youth work, or reports of study sessions from 20 years ago, or simply go through a complete collection of Coyote magazine from 1999 onwards (as we did for the reflections that we are now sharing with you). If you disregard some clear technological and stylistic changes, what is striking is the freshness of the content

of these documents and the contemporary relevance of many conclusions, recommendations and reflections from 15 to 20 years ago.

Clearly, it is not our aim to minimise the achievements in the field; many major accomplishments have been made that could not have been imagined in the 1990s (e.g. a certificate such as Youthpass, based on self-assessment and generated by the organisers themselves). But if we look at the consolidation of training practice and the professionalisation of the field, we will also notice the parallel development of something that could be called a "trainers' culture" or the building up of elements of a common "trainers' identity". A number of implicit and explicit "rules" and "rituals" exist that are hardly questioned, because it is simply "the way things are done" in training for youth work. These include the timing of the training days, having the sessions divided into generally equal "blocks", circle seating arrangements, and standard sessions (for instance, can you have an EVS training without coming across "intercultural learning"? How many of us skip it or approach it differently?).

Many of the rituals and principles that have developed can be considered elements of a "good training practice". Today, we can add that this is true, but only if these elements come out of genuine reflection rather than dogmatism or habit. Self-awareness and even humour can help in addressing these issues before they stagnate, blocking any further innovation.

For us, one of the challenges is the sheer speed of technological change. All "offline" learning in traditional training settings is under scrutiny, and we should reflect on whether training conducted in the old ways actually works anymore. Maybe we are quick to react to emerging social challenges. But how slow (and ready) are we to change?

The emerging future of training

Having said all this, can we sense what the "emerging future" of training in the youth field is? Can we sense how this kind of work will look like in 10, 15 or 20 years? Will the current debates, conclusions and words from the Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention still be relevant then?

We may not know all the answers. We may only have a vague idea at the moment. And this is OK, as long as we keep our minds and hearts open to reflect on and challenge paradigms and fixed opinions. Following Otto Scharmer's (2009) advice, we need to keep on reflecting, sharing and co-creating, keeping in mind the "inner position" that we are contributing from: is it from the past, from the present or from the emerging future?

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Chapter 33

A three-dimensional youth work evaluation model

Marti Taru

Introduction

This chapter focuses on evaluation of youth work at European level. Despite its long history, youth work has not achieved full recognition in society. It is not even recognised as much as related fields such as social work and the formal education system. The question is not so much about what youth work can offer in the first place. There is evidence on how youth work activities can significantly influence the attitudes, skills and behaviour of young people participating in these activities. Rather, the question is about what is unique to youth work: what can it offer in addition to and in a different manner from its neighbouring fields of practice? This question does not have a clear answer, and may be seen as a youth work identity crisis (Coussée 2008). However, this is also considered part of its natural development (Lorenz, Coussée and Verschelden 2010).

En route to being integrated into society as a field of unique praxis, youth work faces major challenges related to recognition. In general, recognition of youth work means that there is a commonly shared understanding of its outcomes. With professionalisation and institutionalisation, youth work has been gradually evolving towards being integrated into the public administration system. But to be financed

by the public budget, programmes have to be evidence based. Hence, evaluating and documenting the outcomes of youth work is key to unlocking the door to the public purse. This is easier said than done. Evaluation of youth work is a highly complex task that requires a lot of quality research. In any evaluation exercise, a central component is the "measuring rod", or the expected outcomes, against which the actual outcomes of a youth work activity are compared and their value assessed.

This chapter is primarily concerned with the measuring rod, or the dimensions of the (expected) outcomes of youth work. Since the measuring rod acts as a frame of reference against which the value of youth work activities is assessed, it is also crucial for defining the standards that must be met by youth work. Currently, the expected outcomes are often derived from public policy documents, thus giving youth work a role in achieving the objectives of public policy. Such an instrumentalising view of youth work is not welcomed by all practitioners. When we look at the history of youth work (described in the series on the history of youth work of the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership) as well as the variety of youth work in contemporary European countries, we see that the effects of youth work can by no means be reduced to its instrumental value. However, instrumentalisation is not inherently negative either. This chapter argues that there is more to youth work than its instrumental value as outlined in policy documents and proposes two additional dimensions to be included in the "measuring rod".

A three-dimensional model

A general youth work evaluation model outlines three features, useful for evaluating youth work activities.

Youth work and socialisation

For a successful transition to adult life, children and youth need to develop values, attitudes and skills that will allow them to successfully participate in working life as well as in other spheres of society. Evidently, the specific personal features that need developing are those that are in accordance with the contemporary understandings of what characterises a mature and socially integrated individual. Hence they vary across time and societies. Youth work can be seen as an additional learning environment in addition to the family and formal education that helps to develop appropriate skills, attitudes and other personal features. In general, there is little doubt that this is one of the roles of youth work. Previously, the importance of this function has been described by introducing the concept of the transit zone (Coussée, Williamson and Verschelden 2013). This is rooted in the very basic need of a society to maintain stability and assure continuity of its functions and structures. For that, every full member of a society needs to carry out certain roles; youth work could support that. A lot of research on the outcomes and effects of youth work falls into this category, showing that participation in youth work activities contributes to acquiring and mastering skills and personal qualities that are necessary in daily life. Good examples of such qualities include tolerance, an entrepreneurial mindset and reduction of bullying.

However, is this the full value of youth work? Perhaps not: the reduction of the value of youth work to its instrumental value has been criticised by youth work practitioners. This critique maintains that young people need to be approached holistically, as personalities, not mechanically, as bundles of personality features that can be influenced separately. Indeed, supporting the development of agency in young people has been seen perhaps as the core feature of youth work that sets it apart from other fields of practice and social policies.

Youth work and participation

The concept of social fora refers to spaces and activities that bring young people together to discuss their own situations and needs, as well as that of society, and plan and carry out activities to help improve the situation of youth in society as well as society as a whole. The participation of young people is deeply rooted in political culture, and in the values and practices of contemporary European societies. Nowadays, the availability of opportunities for citizen participation in political and social policy decisions is considered the norm. Naturally this applies also to all young people above 18 years of age and since the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989 and the ratification by an absolute majority of states within a few years the same rights apply, in principle, also to minors below 18 years of age. According to this convention, minors are also to be seen as members of society having the right to participate actively in governance.

From this perspective, the function of youth work is to provide support for the participation of young people. The main criterion to be used for evaluating a youth work activity is the actual impact of young people on decision making at organisational, local, national and/or international level. There are a range of models that could be used for that purpose (Karsten 2012). Many youth work activities have been and are functioning as structures helping to channel young people's preferences and needs to the administrative-political system at local, national and international level, with youth councils being the best examples here.

Importantly, this aspect of youth work does not include non-formal learning taking place in youth councils and other structures. While acknowledging that in real life learning and doing go hand in hand and are inseparable, these aspects need to be separated in an analytical model. Analytically speaking, the non-formal learning aspect of participation in youth work settings needs to be assessed within the socialising dimension of youth work.

Youth work and subjective well-being

In recent decades, concepts such as subjective satisfaction with life, subjective well-being and happiness have gained more importance in public discourse. Policy makers, too, have increasingly acknowledged the importance of subjective well-being. Its significance began to rise following the Second World War (Moore and Keyes 2008). Among major policy relevant documents that have used this approach we find the:

▶ UN Human Development Index;
▶ Global Gross National Happiness Survey;

- ▶ Council of Europe, "Well-being for all" (2008);
- ▶ World Happiness Report.

On the surface, these concepts are self-explanatory; everyone has an idea what happiness and well-being mean. In this chapter, subjective well-being is understood as a sense of satisfaction associated with fulfilling one's potential (the eudaemonic aspect of subjective well-being) as well as experiencing pleasant emotions (the hedonistic aspect of subjective well-being).

Subjective well-being has increasingly become a concern of public policies, where it is closely linked to mental and physical health issues. The well-being of the young has made its way also into policy documents specifically addressing young people. The importance of their welfare has been documented in a resolution of the Council of the European Union from 2008,[222] and after that in the EU Youth Strategy, in which physical health and psychological well-being is one of the eight courses of action. A European Commission recommendation from 2013[223] links children's mental health to informal learning activities taking place outside school and family. The topic of youth health and well-being has also been among major themes of the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership.

The very nature of youth work is closely related to the subjective well-being derived from participation in its activities. Voluntary participation, as one of the founding values of youth work, demands that youth work activities bring participants joy and subjective satisfaction, or at least no unpleasant experiences and emotions. It is hard to overvalue the significance of pleasant experiences in youth work; providing a pleasant social and psychological environment has been one of the main features of youth work.

Given the significance of subjective well-being for young people, as with adults, there is every reason to view youth work activities as a resource for positive emotions and experiences. Hence, evaluation of youth work should make an attempt to gauge the nature and amount of pleasurable experiences derived from participation in a youth work activity as an independent feature of a youth work activity in its own right. Neighbouring fields of research, for instance positive psychology, have the capability to provide adequate concepts and tools to do such an evaluation (e.g. through the concepts of eudaemonic and hedonistic aspects of subjective well-being).

The general evaluation model

As has been argued above, evaluation of youth work needs to be based on three dimensions: its socialising role, participation-enhancing role and its role in providing positive experiences. For evaluation of a youth work activity, applying this model

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222. Resolution of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council of 20 November 2008 on the health and well-being of young people.
223. Commission Recommendation of 20.2.2013, Investing in children: breaking the cycle of disadvantage, Brussels, 20.02.2013 C(2013) 778 final, available at http://ec.europa.eu/justice/fundamental-rights/files/c_2013_778_en.pdf, accessed 4 April 2017.

would mean establishing the value of each of the dimensions per youth work activity. This would give a profile of each youth work activity or institution. Table 3 below gives a hint how, in principle, the model could be used.

Table 3: Three-dimensional evaluation model for youth work

		Evaluation dimension		
		Socialisation	Participation	Positive emotions
Youth work activity	Sports club	Medium	Low	High
	Local youth council	High	High	Medium
	Open youth work centre	Medium	Medium	Medium

In Table 3, hypothetical profiles of three different youth work activities are outlined. A sports club is seen as scoring medium in the socialisation dimension (e.g. attending training and competitions would require the skills of planning and time management; team sports probably have a stronger influence on teamwork), scoring low in the participation dimension (as training plans are based on expert knowledge, and not so much on young people's wishes and ideas) and scoring high in the positive emotions dimension (e.g. pleasant experiences resulting from playing a game and/or being together with peers). A local youth council would score high on socialisation (it requires being highly skilful in communication, co-operation, time management and event planning as well as knowing how a public administration organisation is run), high on participation (hopefully, as the very purpose of youth councils is to channel young people's interests into the administrative system) and medium on emotions (because participation in management processes often involves disagreements, possibly also conflicts). A youth centre using open youth work methods would score medium on socialisation (learning skills and habits requires time and a systematic approach that might not always be the case when young people only occasionally drop in), medium on participation (while young people certainly have their say on what activities will be carried out, there are also regulations and management board decisions that have to be followed), and medium on emotions (since the activities and participants in an open centre might be relatively unpredictable).

Such a three-dimensional model returns a richer and more nuanced description of youth work activities and environments. The importance of all three dimensions is rooted in the values and practices of European societies, and not just in youth work practices. It is argued that such a perspective gives youth work a more solid basis for relating to other areas of society and for demonstrating the value of youth work.

Ideally, sound evaluation methods will be used so other actors will consider the results trustworthy. Different branches of social research have a wealth of methods that can be used for carrying out youth work evaluation exercises. One of the main

distinctions runs between self-assessment and external evaluation, that is subjective reporting and objective findings. In the three-dimensional framework, both aspects have their place. While success and outcomes along the socialisation dimension might be best understood and documented using an external evaluation framework, self-assessment seems appropriate for gauging the positive emotions derived from youth work activities (although comparing the levels of happiness of youth work participants and non-participants is an option). The effectiveness and outcomes of youth participation could be weighed using both approaches. Of course, in parallel to evaluation exercises, more conceptual issues need be resolved: what activities qualify as youth work, what should be the desired outcomes of youth work, what are the target groups of youth work activities, and how to build an international knowledge base and overcome problems of cross-cultural comparison.

Conclusion

This chapter started by noting that youth work faces the task of demonstrating and documenting its outcomes and that outcomes of evaluation exercises are predetermined by the "measuring rod" used for evaluation. This holds also for youth work, where using a one-dimensional "rod" – the socialisation value of youth work – has been a dominant (though not the only) approach. The chapter argues that instead of a dominant one-dimensional youth work evaluation model that focuses on establishing the instrumental value of youth work, a broader three-dimensional model could be used. The three dimensions characterise the following aspects of a youth work activity: socialisation (a dimension that coincides with the present dominant model), support to youth participation and the potential to provide young people with positive emotions. All three dimensions are rooted deeply in the values and practices of contemporary European societies and cultures and as such, provide a solid basis for working towards recognition of youth work. Using this model would provide a richer and more nuanced picture of each youth work activity. The significance of the three-dimensional model is that it shifts the existing thinking about evaluation of youth work and links it more strongly to the core values of European societies. However, solid and approved evaluation methods are to be used for assessing the impact of each feature per each youth work activity. In the long run, assembling a solid cross-national knowledge base describing the outcomes of youth work activities could be seen as an objective. That would serve as the basis for relating youth work activities with other areas of social policy and practice and, ultimately, help define its role in society.

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Chapter 34

Towards knowledge-based youth work

Helmut Fennes

Background

The Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention recommends a "knowledge-based approach" to youth work in Europe, thereby referring in particular to research on youth work as contributing to the development of a knowledge base that could support the development of youth work practice. This request is not new and reflects a widely shared interest that has existed in the youth field for many years, similar to other sectors of social and educational work.

So what are the specific interests of the main stakeholders in these fields?

Policy makers have an intrinsic interest in the impact and sustainability of the measures that have been introduced in accordance with the policies they have established. At the same time, they have an extrinsic interest to demonstrate that public funds are spent effectively and efficiently.

Practitioners have an intrinsic interest in doing a good job and, therefore, in their professional development, and an extrinsic interest in demonstrating to others that their work is professional, of high quality and valuable for their target groups and for society in general.

Researchers have an intrinsic interest in the acquisition of knowledge and – in the case of the social sciences – an understanding of society, thus supporting its advancement. They also have an extrinsic interest in recognition within their academic field and in its value for society. Furthermore, there is also the need to justify their work to employers and external funders.

In the specific case of the youth field, young people are main stakeholders as well, having an intrinsic interest in spaces where they can develop and follow their interests, and where they can get the support they need and want.

There has been a trend for many years whereby the extrinsic interests have gained importance, primarily due to financial constraints and budget cuts. Policy makers as well as practitioners are faced with an increased demand for public accountability, efficiency and effectiveness – which is considered to be best achieved through "quality". For practitioners this means an increasing need to demonstrate quality in their practice as well as the value of youth work, both of which are linked to the need for recognition of their youth work competences and professionalism. While researchers are confronted with an increasingly competitive work environment forcing them to acquire external funds (e.g. through contracted research), the quest for quality in practice might be of common interest, through research that supports practice by exploring and analysing structures, processes and outcomes of youth work as well as communication that transfers the acquired knowledge and understanding to policy and practice.

While the extrinsic aspects cannot be neglected, it seems important for the youth field to find a balance with intrinsic interests. Only then can the societal, non-economic dimension inherent to youth work be maintained.

A knowledge-based approach – Why and how?

The request for a knowledge-based approach to youth work practice basically refers to two notions. Firstly, better knowledge and a deeper understanding of youth work are needed in order to develop youth work in a changing society, and this requires adequate research and monitoring. Secondly, existing knowledge is not applied sufficiently in youth work practice – pointing to the need for suitable means for knowledge transfer and training.

So what kind of knowledge are we talking about? The 2nd European Youth Work Convention mentions knowledge about different forms of youth work in Europe – in particular, concepts and practices – and about the impact of youth work. The convention also requests that the quality of youth work be improved – which is indirectly linked to a knowledge-based approach to youth work. While the convention mentions "quality" primarily in the context of "delivery" of youth work and adequately qualified and trained youth workers, quality development requires an assessment of youth work practice in a broader sense in order to acquire knowledge about the implementation of youth work. Such an assessment has to include not only the delivery[224] and outcomes of youth work, but also youth work structures and the processes taking place in youth work, which include the principles, approaches, methodologies and methods applied and triggering as well as influencing these processes. This is essential in order to explore "what works" with respect to the explicit and implicit aims and objectives of youth work.

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224. Quality of delivery rather suggests what is referred to in quality discourses as "input quality" than "process quality".

Research can play a valuable role in such an assessment since it provides a relatively neutral and autonomous space that allows a distanced and external view of phenomena, setting these against diverse frameworks of understanding, and in which structures, processes and outcomes can be studied and discussed. In this respect, research cannot ultimately decide what quality is, but it can offer analyses in relation to hypotheses and expectations.

Independent of the definition of quality in youth work, the following model seems to be useful for this field, in particular due to the process orientation and the non-formal and informal learning dimension of youth work:[225]

- ▶ quality of structures (also referred to as "quality of context"): general conditions under which institutions and organisations in the youth field work (legal, organisational and social); human resources, including competences and training of youth workers; financial, infrastructure, technical and other resources, etc.;

- ▶ quality of processes: the way in which youth work organisations try to achieve their objectives through consideration of the needs of young people; participation of young people in decision making; approaches to non-formal and informal education and learning, selection, design and organisation of contents and methods; guidance of young people; relations among youth workers and young people, teachers/trainers and learners, etc.;

- ▶ quality of outcomes and impact: the impact of youth work processes, such as personal development and the development of competences; commitment to apply the competences acquired in their future social, professional and political life.

There is no unique definition of quality in youth work. It depends on the respective concepts applied in or inherent to youth work and can be different not only by country, but also by province/region or even at local level. Such a concept and subsequent definition of quality depends on the following factors:

- ▶ how is youth work embedded in society (e.g. is it an integral element of society)? Who is youth work addressed to (is it inclusive or not)? How is youth work related to other sectors (is it considered to be on an equal level with another sector or is it just an appendage to it? Who are the main stakeholders and how do they relate to each other? How are youth policies established? How is the youth field structured and organised?

- ▶ what are the aims and objectives of youth work (to what extent is it oriented towards the needs of young people)? What are the expected outcomes? What is the expected impact? For instance, is youth work aimed at prevention, problem solving or the emancipation of young people?

- ▶ what is the approach to youth work? What are the principles and values it is based on (is it participatory or directive; is it social work or education)?

- ▶ what are the relations between youth workers and young people (hierarchical or based on partnership)? What are the methodologies and methods applied? What are the spaces for youth work?

225. This model was also used in the study by Fennes and Otten (2008).

All this also has an effect on the resources needed (human resources, infrastructure, etc.) and subsequently on the financial needs and the funding of youth work.

Towards a knowledge base for youth work in Europe

A first step would be an exploration of concepts at national level along the lines drafted above. A lot of work has been done on this already, for example by the Council of Europe through national youth policy reviews and respective syntheses (see Williamson 2002, 2008) and by the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership through a number of publications (Coussée et al. 2010; Coussée, Williamson and Verschelden 2012; Taru, Coussée and Williamson 2014; Verschelden et al. 2009). Furthermore, most countries in Europe have published studies or reports on youth in their countries, which refer (explicitly or implicitly) to aspects of youth work concepts as outlined above.[226]

The challenge is to develop a model framework for youth work concepts so existing studies and reports could be reviewed and respective abstracts could be produced in a systematic way. This would mean that future studies and reports could be designed in order to provide coherent data for a transnational analysis at European level.

The latter would be the second step: mapping national youth work concepts in Europe in order to explore the common ground of youth work concepts in Europe. Some work has already been done in this respect (see Williamson 2015) and is also reflected, for example, in Section I of this publication.

The third step would then be to develop quality criteria and quality standards for youth work in Europe with respect to this "common ground". While the first two steps would be tasks primarily for researchers, this third step requires negotiation among policy makers, practitioners and NGOs active in the youth field, supported by researchers. Quality criteria and standards in youth work should be agreed on by the main stakeholders in order to be respected and implemented in the field, which is part of civil society, is based on participation and to a high degree depends on voluntary engagement and idealism. The concept of co-management between governmental and non-governmental bodies practised in the youth sector of the Council of Europe could serve as a useful model for such a process.

Some work has already been done with respect to quality in youth work (Bergstein, García López and Teichmann 2014; European Commission 2015) as well as with respect to quality in special aspects of youth work such as: non-formal education and training in the field of European youth work (Council of Europe 2007; Fennes and Otten 2008; Porcaro 2013); competences needed for youth work (Pantea 2012);[227] training competences in the field of European youth work (Bergstein, Deltuva and Evrard Markovic 2014; Bergstein and Evrard Markovic 2014a, 2014b). Furthermore, frameworks and schemes of quality criteria and standards have also been developed

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226. In Austria, for example, every five years a report on the situation of youth in Austria is published (see Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft, Familie und Jugend 2011).

227. A competence model for youth workers to work internationally is in the process of being developed by the SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre within the European Training Strategy in the Field of Youth.

in a number of European countries at national level (e.g. Estonian Youth Work Centre 2013).

The challenge is to make use of these studies and models – which partly refer to quality in youth work in a European context – in order to develop quality criteria and standards that would be accepted and applied in youth work across Europe. It is suggested that these be organised by structure, process and outcomes – since this seems to be a useful model – and to make specific reference to youth work competence and training of youth workers as specific aspects of quality in youth work. Given the background and rationale of this chapter, it is recommended that an evidence-based approach to youth work be one of the overall quality criteria in such a model.

Once agreed at a transnational/European level, these quality criteria and standards could be amended at national level in order to reflect specific national quality criteria and standards. The challenge here is to develop coherence between quality criteria and standards developed at European level with those already developed at national level.

The fourth step would be to analyse youth work practice in relation to these quality criteria and standards both at national and transnational level. Such an analysis would also have to explore the outcomes of youth work in relation to youth work structures and processes. This would again be a task for research, providing feedback to youth work practitioners and organisations on which structural aspects (human resources, infrastructure) and which methodologies and methods applied in youth work are useful for achieving the aims and objectives of youth work, including the achievement of agreed quality standards.

Due to social change, the conditions for youth work are not static, but dynamic. In particular, the political, social and economic conditions for young people might change, as well as their interests, needs, habits, lifestyles, etc. Therefore, the concepts of youth work – and subsequent quality criteria and standards – will need to be reviewed on a regular basis, such as every 10 years. In this respect, regular monitoring of youth work policy and practice, including regular reports at national and transnational level, would be useful. Research could play an important role here by studying social change in the youth field and its possible interdependence with the development of youth policy and youth work practice over time, as well as the interdependence between policy and practice in the youth field. This would require further development of the research agenda(s) related to youth issues, seeking co-operation between the youth sector and other sectors concerned, e.g. the education sector.

Knowledge transfer

As mentioned earlier, a knowledge-based approach requires knowledge transfer to practitioners as well as to policy makers – with the latter needing to establish the necessary conditions for a knowledge-based approach in youth work practice. This seems to be one of the main challenges for evidence-based youth work practice. Researchers are accustomed to presenting their findings to an academic audience rather than to other target groups. Therefore, their publications and presentations

– often in academic language, too long and too detailed – are not adapted to the needs of those who could make use of their findings in practice or policy. They need to be "translated" into a user-friendly format specific to each target group and be communicated accordingly in a variety of ways – online, printed, through podcasts, etc., but also face-to-face through presentations, workshops, seminars or training activities for practitioners. Indeed, the transfer of research findings should also be included in training programmes for trainers/facilitators. This knowledge transfer would need to be updated on an ongoing basis, in line with the ongoing change and development of youth work and subsequent research findings.

Such a knowledge transfer system and process requires an appropriate communication strategy and adequate resources. The latter would be a good investment in order to ensure that the (usually much larger share of) resources invested into research are actually put to good use.

And what about recognition?

The Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention refers to the (public) recognition of youth work, organisations active in youth work and youth workers, primarily in relation to quality and, thus, indirectly in relation to a knowledge-based approach to youth work. But would quality and an evidenced-based approach contribute to the (public) recognition of youth work? We do not really have sufficient evidence to answer this. Even assuming that the quality of youth work has improved over the past decades, one cannot verify that this has resulted in an increased recognition of youth work. More likely, the recognition of youth work at a macro-level (including the recognition of youth workers and youth work organisations and structures at micro and meso-level) depends on the relevance given to youth work as an established sector and profession in society, as with the education sector and teaching. To achieve this, it would be useful to have evidence of the value of youth work and the extent to which it contributes to building a modern society, at least with respect to its political, social and cultural dimensions, and maybe also in economic terms. Again, this would be a task for research, and quite a challenging one at that. Only if the evidence is promoted by opinion leaders (including policy makers) at all levels will we witness an increase in the recognition of youth work in society at large. This requires lobbying at all levels and it is likely that this will take some time. But it could be achieved with the spirit, enthusiasm and idealism inherent to the youth field.

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Chapter 35

Funding sustainable youth work

Claudius Siebel

Youth work and the age-old question of money

The question of how to fund youth work is probably as old as the field of youth work itself, which has always been the subject of conflicting interests and has had to compete with other areas of work relating to education or other child and youth-related policies. The demand that youth work be given the means required to fulfil its aims dates back just as far. This demand has been voiced more loudly in recent years as a result of the substantial cuts to youth work budgets in most European countries following the financial and economic crisis. The declaration of the 2nd Youth Work Convention quite rightly points out that over the past five years "the development of youth work in different parts of Europe has been varied. While youth work remains supported, politically and financially, in some countries, it has fallen victim to austerity measures and political indifference in others". The EU's youth work study (2014: 13) also states that 19 member states have experienced public budget cuts for youth work at national level due to the economic crisis. In all other countries there was a limited impact on national level public budgets for youth work, or national budget cuts were expected.

This relatively negative finding with regard to the financial situation of youth work is in contrast to the growing importance and political recognition of this field of work at European level. The final declaration of the 8th Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth, 2008 in Kyiv, Ukraine stresses that – in view of many challenges young people are facing in Europe – the development of quality youth work and its recognition should be a key issue for the organisations in the

youth sector.[228] Under the Council of the European Union's 2009 renewed framework for European co-operation in the youth field,[229] youth work was assigned special significance as a "cross-cutting tool" in developing individual fields of action relating to youth policy. The first two European Youth Work Conventions in Ghent and Brussels in 2010 and 2015 and a raft of European-level resolutions have taken up and continued this development, and the issues of funding and appropriate resources have always been recognised as part of the problem. The 2010 Council Resolution on Youth Work[230] invites member states to "[p]romote different kinds of sustainable support for youth work, e.g. sufficient funding, resources or infrastructure." The Council's conclusions on reinforcing youth work to ensure cohesive societies[231] underline "[t]he importance of further developing youth work across Europe and further strengthening EU cooperation in this field" and accordingly invite member states "[t]o demonstrate continuous commitment towards the development of quality and professional youth work provision, including by paid staff and volunteers, by developing supportive measures at all levels, including education and training opportunities for youth workers."

This requirement is in keeping with the recommendations of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention, which again stress the fact that "effective youth work needs a sufficient and a sustainable system of funding. Within this, existing youth work practices and structures need to be funded as well as innovation and new forms of practice."

Sustainable funding of youth work

What does sustainable actually mean in this context? If one takes the usual definition of the expression "sustainability", then it means the use of resources in such a way as to preserve the essential characteristics, stability and natural regeneration capacity of the system in question. If we leave aside the notion of natural regeneration capacity, which applies more to biological systems, in the case of the sustainable funding of youth work, the aim is to preserve the essential characteristics and consequently the stability and the operability of the youth work system so that it can meet its goals and fulfil its tasks.

One very essential characteristic of youth work is a stable and sound infrastructure. The original Latin meaning of the word "infrastructure" is a substructure, in other words, sound facilities and services to which children and young people have access. Budgetary cuts in infrastructure are therefore anything but sustainable and yet the tendency is increasingly towards such cuts. The exacerbation of social problems in particular, and also current crises and concerns such as extremism (on many sides) and xenophobia lead to increased demands on youth work to "plug the gaps" and

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228. See www.coe.int/t/dg4/youth/Source/IG_Coop/Min_Conferences/2008_Kyiv_CEMRY_Declaration_en.pdf, accessed 4 April 2017.

229. Council Resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European co-operation in the youth field (2010-2018), 2009/C 311/01.

230. Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on Youth Work, 4.12.2010 (2010/C 327/01).

231. Council conclusions on reinforcing youth work to ensure cohesive societies, 23.5.2015 (2015/C 170/02).

to a certain extent to act as a "breakdown service for society". Increasingly, youth work is only politically acceptable if it addresses social disadvantages and social situations that are currently causing problems. Organisations that do more general types of youth work are finding it increasingly difficult to secure public funding. Moreover, owing to budgetary cuts, more emphasis is being placed on the need for recognisable effects and a demonstrable return on investment. Not all organisations are in a position to provide proof of this or to undertake the necessary evaluation of their work.

Together, these developments and trends lead to a constant restlessness in the system which, given the social and political expectations, loses its original socio-pedagogical character and is being altered beyond recognition (Lindner 2012). As a result, the focus everywhere is gradually being placed on mainly short and medium-term projects ("projectitis") – disregarding the fact that the funding of individual projects cannot replace the ongoing funding of the entire infrastructure. Youth work can only reach its full potential if there is a reliable and sustainable infrastructure.

A further aspect concerning the infrastructure of youth work is the availability of qualified staff and their further and in-house training. Everywhere the cuts resulting from the financial and economic crisis have led to unstable and uncertain working conditions in youth work, which in turn threatens the quality, continuity and further development of this field of work, not least because staff turn to other areas of work (AGJ 2011).

Youth work and different sources of funding

Each EU country decides on its own funding strategies for youth work. There are three main funding approaches to financing the youth work sector:
- ▶ public/government funding;
- ▶ private financing;
- ▶ European funding.

Public/government funding still makes up the largest proportion of funds for youth work. Although this is the area where most data are available, it is difficult to make generalisations because funding comes from different levels of government (national, regional and local) and also partly from various policy areas. However, as already mentioned above, public/government funding has also decreased owing to the financial and economic crisis. As a result, the other two sources of funding are becoming increasingly important.

The area where there is the least amount of reliable data is regarding private financing; however, evidence from a number of countries shows that private financing mainly comes through channels such as membership fees from youth organisations, lottery or gambling funds, religious institutions, private foundations and philanthropic organisations. In some countries this sort of private financing has for many years covered a large part of the costs of youth work and to some extent guarantees its independence and freedom from possible government interference or one-sided exploitation with a view to giving priority to certain themes and achieving certain

objectives. At the same time, the private sector cannot and must not be the only or the main source of funding. If so, youth work would also focus disproportionately on the themes, objectives and target groups of certain organisations, institutions and foundations and depend on their financial situation.

For the past few years, the youth work sector has relied increasingly on European funding, and in particular EU youth programmes (since 2014, Erasmus+: Youth in Action) now play a predominant role. Many countries identify this source of funding as being an important component of the youth work funding package in their country, and in some countries (such as Romania) this is actually the main source of financing for the sector. The European Social Fund also supports programmes and projects in the youth field as well as, for example, the European Youth Foundation run by the Council of Europe.

Fundraising/sponsoring as alternative ways of funding youth work?

Wherever public funding is at risk or has already been substantially reduced, the hope of securing alternative forms of funding – fundraising or sponsoring – gains ground. It should be remembered in this context that sponsoring is a form of co-operation that is based on mutual trade-offs and therefore requires equally strong partners. Youth work seldom meets this requirement. As a rule, the short-term financial needs of youth work are incompatible with long-term, business-oriented considerations. This means that the relationship is unbalanced and that youth work finds itself in the position of a supplicant. Such relations tend to have discouraging effects. As a result, youth work can neither present its strengths and resources in a positive light nor develop them. Ultimately, the hope that sponsoring can provide sound financing on a long-term basis is unrealistic (Wendt 2013: 686). The same applies to funding by private foundations. Although the balance between giving and taking is less problematic in this context, the goals of the foundations are usually too specialised and the budgets too limited. Private foundations can, of course, at least alleviate the lack of funding for short-term measures and projects but can in no way take on the long-term financing of institutions and services in the field of youth work. On the whole, it would be a rather negative development for youth work if governments were to increasingly withdraw from their "statutory tasks" and abandon the field to voluntary and charitable agreements between private parties and those involved in youth work. That would probably further endanger visible, effective and sustainable youth work.[232]

Youth work and Europe

No matter how good and important European sources of funding may be, they should by no means replace national public funding or be used as a pretext for

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232. This conclusion derives from the perspective of the still rather public and corporate-based European funding model of youth work, keeping in mind the fact that there are other models (e.g. in the United States) where mostly private and philanthropic means keep youth work alive.

cutting back on national funding. European financial instruments should and must play a complementary and innovative role. This is indeed part of the funding logic of European funding instruments, which, as a rule, require national co-financing. Moreover, the Erasmus+: Youth in Action programme obviously focuses on European cross-border projects, which can in no way be a substitute for national, regional and local youth work. Even the financing of infrastructure and staff through the Erasmus+: Youth in Action programme is possible only to a very limited extent. Nevertheless, European co-operation in youth work needs strong instruments to financially support European exchanges and co-operation. In this regard the Erasmus+: Youth in Action programme is the main source of funding for these projects and continues to support European NGOs in the youth work field.

Without this programme, in fact, the above-mentioned positive developments in the European political debate on youth work would hardly be conceivable. In addition to the funding of concrete exchanges and peer learning projects for young people and trained professionals, the Erasmus+: Youth in Action programme and the network of national agencies play a very important role in supporting European co-operation in the youth field and in supporting and continuing to develop youth work in a European context.

Also, the Council of Europe supports and encourages young people to become actively involved in strengthening civil society in Europe and to defend the values of human rights, cultural diversity and social cohesion; it promotes and develops youth work and youth policies, putting special emphasis on the participation of young people. The Youth Department of the Council of Europe regularly brings together young people, youth associations and networks, government agencies and experts for discussions and feedback on current policies and future objectives. And, as a priority, it encourages the development of youth associations, networks and initiatives, and promotes international co-operation. These projects are pursued through activities ranging from training courses, study sessions, seminars, expert meetings and research, publications and advice on youth policy development. The European Youth Centres in Strasbourg and Budapest and the European Youth Foundation all play a vital role in implementing these activities.

The future of youth work funding

"Tory councils shut HALF their youth centres since David Cameron came to power"[233]

This and similar headlines are a dramatic illustration of the difficult situation already mentioned above with regard to the funding and recognition of youth work in Europe. However, they also clearly show that there is a political dimension to the problem, for there still seems to be a clear contrast between the repeated public affirmations concerning the potential of youth work and the actual political recognition and corresponding financial support it receives. In the last few years youth work has experienced and, to some extent, actively helped to address various problems such

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233. Read more at www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/tory-councils-shut-half-youth-6383808, accessed 4 April 2017.

as right-wing extremism, unemployment and most recently, the refugee issue. This has in no way led to lasting recognition or even a stabilisation (including in financial terms) of this field of work. Youth work appears in a strange way to seek to avoid its overall situation being placed in a political context. Werner Lindner speaks in this connection of the "constant failure to place child and youth work in a political context" (2012)[234] and suggests that there should be a return to a more political approach in the sector. Assuming that child and youth work nevertheless continues to have a socio-pedagogical, educational, youth policy and societal justification and is therefore a systemic factor, then the aim must be for child and youth work to no longer be carried out and improved solely within legally and politically determined parameters, but for the parameters themselves to be discussed and critically evaluated (ibid.).

Parameters, here, mean phenomena such as the surreptitious deformation of social work to serve economic purposes, or purely neo-liberal financial and fiscal policies that have a substantial impact on many aspects of national and local authorities' capacity to act, or the economisation and privatisation of the private sector that has resulted from the prevailing New Public Management approach.

In some countries, it is this approach that has resulted in trends towards decentralisation, which has in turn increased the gap between politics and youth work and has potentially reduced the relevance and visibility of youth work through the introduction of strategic and business-oriented management.

Overall, according to the assessment made by the German Federal Youth Council (Deutscher Bundesjugendring), "the outcome of the politically accepted depletion of public funds is that the state no longer fulfils its public responsibilities" (2013). Given the importance of public funding for youth work, this situation is alarming and, on the whole, the trends that have been mentioned should interest youth work stakeholders and protagonists and encourage them to do their utmost to secure an appropriate place for their field of work in the existing welfare state.

Of course, even Lindner's suggestion that youth work should better reflect youth policy will not offer any quick new solutions or actually remedy the financial problems. But such a development would at least offer more opportunities to compete for the allocation of financial resources at all (youth) policy levels. This requires knowledge of existing legal obligations, thorough knowledge of the impact of youth work and the relevant socio-pedagogical objectives, and carefully balanced lobbying skills.

As a whole, with youth work that more closely reflects youth policy, the aim would be to ensure that future youth work protagonists no longer see their role as one of passively implementing policy decisions, but as playing a more proactive and decisive, and also more effective and carefully considered part in the framing of European, national, regional and local policies that are of relevance to their field of work (Lindner 2012).

Such involvement must of course, and above all, take place at the different levels of the corresponding youth policies, where they exist. In this connection, the European Commission's youth work study makes a relatively positive finding:

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234. This assessment of the situation was made in a German context but also appears to be applicable to the general situation in Europe.

Most countries either have a specific strategy or action plan on youth work or their broader youth strategies incorporate aspects of youth work. Beyond regulation, the sector is supported by national level policies, programmes and funding. In fact, there is evidence that policy developments related to youth work are increasingly being developed in countries across the EU as governments commit to establishing, renewing or replacing youth work strategies, policies and funding programmes. (2014: 34 ff.)

If this finding is correct, then governments would have to be taken at their word and would allocate the necessary resources to these strategies and action plans. Here, once again, we witness the contrast between the much-invoked potential of youth work and the allegedly unavoidable need for budget savings – a contrast that must in future be overcome by means of a new political awareness on the part of those working in this area.

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Chapter 36

Youth work, cross-sectoral youth policy, and co-operation: critical reflections on a puzzling relationship

Magda Nico

The puzzling relationship

The meanings and practices of both cross-sectoral youth policy and youth work are multiple and also variable across time and space. It is not surprising, then, that the relationships between these two – let's call them "concepts" for now – are numerous and often unclear.[235] In this article my main goal is not to reverse this situation by identifying, developing or presenting a single, straightforward and clear understanding of this relationship, but instead to present, question and reflect upon the very diversity of meanings, practices and bridges found between these two concepts.

The relationship between cross-sectoral co-operation and youth work is puzzling in at least two significant ways. First, it is implicitly linked to the heart of the never-ending sociological debate on the competing roles and effects of social structure on one hand and individual agency on the other. These concepts suggest that there is a degree[236] of interdependency in this relationship. Youth policy inevitably frames

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235. They can take different forms, for instance, "between educational sectors, between agencies and policy domains affecting young people (such as health, employment or justice), between funding sources, and at different levels of administration." (AA.VV. 2010: 3).
236. This degree of interdependency varies from "high and ideal" to, unfortunately, "low and realistic".

the agenda and the amplitude of possibilities for youth work professional practices and, *mutatis mutandis*, youth workers'[237] practices also put flesh on the bones of youth policies. Furthermore, this never-ending sociological debate may make the desired distance between researchers from policy/structure and simultaneously from youth work/agency[238] – and thus the roles of moderator and source of information – more difficult and less practised. This is so for three reasons: (i) sociologists and youth researchers in general may have defined their theoretical affiliations, research practices and empirical evidence beyond the particular subject topic of "youth"; (ii) this "academic identity" is likely to be rather binary – either one is pro-structuralism or pro-individualism;[239] and (iii) the self-positioning of each researcher in this binary scheme may enter into conflict with some taken-for-granted theories of individualisation, uncertainty, empowerment and "activation" of young people. To sum up, while (youth) sociologists could never deny the (predominant) effect of social structure and social context on individual trajectories and (educational, professional or general) "outcomes of life", thus emphasising the importance of social and public policies as a condition *sine qua non* (even if not sufficient or efficient at times) for the minimisation and attenuation of unequal opportunities of life and of conditions of existence, youth workers are more or exclusively concentrated on "activating" or "empowering" young people as directly as possible, independently of the measurability or relevance of the effect.[240] This is, furthermore, a large part of their respective professional distinction and identity. The structural difference between these two professions is not simply based on different approaches to the same goal, problem or situation but is a matter of ideology, and that demands our self-reflection and self-criticism as a youth field. Without "common ground" at this level, "co-operation" is abstract; it is not even a construct, let alone a constructive practice. This common ground should not be found exclusively among youth workers – as was the aim of the Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention – but among all "workers for youth". All suggestions for this purpose, such as "mutual development and the exchange of practices", "peer[241] learning and peer-review exercises", "co-operation and exchange across Europe requires support for regular platforms for dialogue and sustainable networks and partnerships", are valid and much needed, although not at all evident, in the whole youth sector. Co-operation should in practice imply shared objectives and ultimately win-win situations (Taru 2015: 6).

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237. Youth work is considered in this article in a specific and narrow sense, that is, it is referring to professional youth workers (even if with no recognition in some countries) and not to professionals that occasionally or through other professional affiliations end up working with or for young people (such as teachers, careers counsellors or youth justice workers).

238. At least assuming that youth work is conceived as a "facilitating agency" (Sercombe 2010, quoted in Williamson 2015: 8).

239. This is at least true for the sake of sociological, theoretical and epistemological debates: it can be found, for example, in youth research journals such as the *Journal of Youth Studies*, e.g. Bynner's critical comments, the concept of Arnett's "emergent adulthood", or the theoretical debate on the validity of the theses of individualisation (namely by Beck), well visible in critical titles such as "One step forward, one step Beck" (Roberts 2012).

240. In fact, in the 2nd European Youth Work Declaration, it is clearly stated that "youth work should continue to focus on the processes and the needs of young people, remaining outcomes informed and not outcomes led." (AA.VV. 2015a: 5).

241. *Lato senso*.

Second, and still associated with the previous idea, there is a lack of classification of these experiences of "co-operation" within the youth field's own terminology, namely the formal and non-formal dichotomy. This would help to clarify whether co-operation should comply with the structures and policies that already exist – a formal, legally framed co-operation – or if youth workers or workers in the youth sector are expected to be "policy change makers" themselves (AA.VV. 2015b). Research has shown that the top-down approach (legally framed co-operation) and the bottom-up approach (youth workers and policy change makers) are not, and should not be, mutually exclusive approaches.

Sharing a common goal and budget, and having both legally formalised in a protocol, contributes to the establishment of an ethic of co-operation. Some authors have shown examples of successful forms of co-operation where individuals, although having a legal context or background – a legal nature and compulsory character to co-operate – consider this co-operation as an individual commitment, with personal and professional motivation (Residori, Reichert and Willems 2015). They argue that this is an optimal combination of legislative background and flexibility (Taru 2015: 8). Nonetheless, "trust between people, mutual understanding and good interpersonal relationships play a significant role in smooth co-operation" (ibid.). These are equally significant and indispensable features of a successful, transparent, impartial, open and democratic decision-making process (ibid.). But it is still important to clarify the state of play of co-operation in a certain country or region to assess its impact and problems, before, during and after making the decision to co-operate. One of the most recurrent problems in cross-sectoral co-operation and policy is the lack of clarity about the roles of the individual or collective partners. Since the "clarity of rights and responsibilities to all participants in the CSYP[242] structures and process is amongst success factors of co-operation within the framework of CSYP" (Taru 2015: 7), developing mechanisms of clarification becomes urgent. The above-mentioned classification of the formal and informal structures would therefore contribute to the clarification of each participant's or each type of participant's role, including some of the least-empowered partners involved in these processes, alongside researchers, youth workers.

A complex mosaic of meanings, possibilities and (reported) wills

As was mentioned above, the meanings of both cross-sectoral youth policy and youth work are multiple and are not straightforward. The diversity of meanings of cross-sectoral youth policy creates problems of operationalisation and comparability, while that of youth work unveils issues of professional identity, credibility and, again and ultimately, of operationalisation and efficacy of "youth policy co-operation" itself. As stated in the Declaration of the 1st European Youth Work Convention: "Youth work is both complex and often misunderstood on account of that complexity." (AA.VV. 2010: 2)

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242. Cross-sectoral youth policy.

As for the term "cross-sectoral" youth policy, there are at least three possible meanings found in relevant documents of the United Nations or European institutions (Council of Europe, European Commission, Council of the European Union, etc.) and organisations (for example, the European Youth Forum): the first is one that crosses official/governmental ministries, departments or agencies that are affiliated with different sectors of "activity" (such as education, employment, health, housing), frequently called cross-governmental; the second is one that crosses or bridges the youth organisation sector (and/or ultimately the voice of young people) with the policy-making sector (Nico 2014: 14); and the third, the least-used in the youth field, is a policy that crosses the public, private and other sectors (or alternatively between governmental and non-governmental sectors in general). The first two meanings, although referring to very different processes and ideologies, are often mentioned together, and form equal parts of the definition of the adjective "cross-sectoral". However, a more detailed analysis of the use of this concept in more concrete settings (such as peer-learning exercises or youth policy reviews) reveals that the most common use of cross-sectoral youth policy is the one that does not include a vertical process – between formal administrative bodies and young people, youth organisations or youth workers at the local level, but instead a horizontal one (between the several formal administrative bodies) – which makes the role of youth work in cross-sectoral youth policy less evident or explicit. In this sense youth work's "privileged position" in relation to young people is counterbalanced with its unprivileged position in relation to youth policy making.

Part of this status has to do with the resistance of youth workers themselves to professionally bridging these two spheres, youth work with young people and youth policy making, at least not as mere "instruments" of youth policy implementation or operationalisation (Declaration of the 1st European Youth Work Convention 2010). This was, at least, the position taken in 2010, specifically as regards cross-sectoral co-operation (see quote below). Youth work is mentioned in cross-sectoral specific literature – such as reports on cross-sectoral peer-learning exercises or exchanges of cross-sectoral policy practices produced, for instance, in the scope of some initiatives developed by the EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership – or the youth policy reviews conducted on behalf of the Council of Europe, as one of the agents for the implementation of policies, which seem to be more in line with the Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention (AA.VV. 2015: 3). This issue thus represents a latent tension involving the definition of the passive/active role of youth work in the implementation of cross-sectoral youth policy.

> Youth work is, of course, well-placed to enable contact and intervention with young people. It can, however, feel that its privileged position and relationship with young people can be compromised through joint working with agencies such as the police or vocational training providers, even if ultimately goals are shared between the agencies and young people themselves. … Few would disagree that more communication, co-ordination and co-operation is required. Yet, for youth work to engage better in such processes, there is the challenge of its identity and a fear of instrumentalisation. (Declaration of the 1st European Youth Work Convention 2010: 3)

Having said this, the mainstream understanding of youth policy is "that it must collaborate with others, communicate, encompass, integrate or lead to a set of

coherent plans of action, programmes and policies that are, in principle, the formal or legal responsibility of other umbrella sectors. But again, it also becomes clear that collaboration, communication and integration, etc. are treated as mutually equivalent processes" (Nico 2014: 17). So "co-operation" is a conceptual knot with similar processes and is only one of the many expressions used to refer to collective work done by several sectors, ministries and/or departments on behalf of the improvement[243] of young people's lives. The consensus in the Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention is strong but, perhaps because is it based on somewhat vague principles, "there is a need for more collaborative practice, to gain more experience and develop models for closer co-operation between different actors from other sectors working with young people." (AA.VV. 2015: 9)

In a co-operation model, the youth sector would share "information and competences, objectives and goals, and also results" with each one of the other relevant sectors (Motamed-Afshari 2014). This "inter-sectoral co-operation" would imply "recognised relationships formed to take short or long-term actions that are more effective, efficient or sustainable than in one sector alone" (Motamed-Afshari 2014, in Nico, 2014: 21). But the role and the position of youth work in a structure, hierarchy or organisation chart are still unclear. In the Declaration of the 1st European Youth Work Convention it is indeed stated that one of the tensions of youth work "is establishing a position in cross-sectoral activity"[244] (AA.VV. 2010: 2), while in the Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention the engagement "in collaborative practice, partnership working and cross-sectorial co-operation" (AA.VV. 2015: 2) is referred to as one of the dimensions of the specific role of youth work.

The position of youth work could be, in principle, one of the following three possibilities (varying across time, country or topic):

> *a*. Youth work(er) as an agent in the "youth sector". This would imply a layered collaboration and youth work would represent one type of agent of the youth sector field, along with policy makers and policy executors (civil servants) and youth researchers. The collaboration would be a practice among youth workers or between their organisations (first), between the different agents in the youth sector field (second) and, lastly, between the youth sector (or ministry) and other administrative divisions (or ministries, namely of health, education, employment, etc.). Co-operation would be within and between different sectoral levels, and youth work would be part of the youth sector level (Figure 6). However, the role of youth work in this rather hierarchical system appears to be insufficient, at least according to the Declaration of the 1st European Youth Work Convention, where one can read that "youth work can sometimes be a weak partner within such arrangements, producing concerns about the erosion of its distinctive contribution to young people's lives" (Declaration of the 1st European Youth Work Convention 2010: 3).

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243. The means to achieve improvement of young people's lives are frequently too standardised. In consequence, youth policies and programmes often constrain, regulate and control more than they liberate.

244. Besides "reconciling youth research, policy and practice, making sense of different youth policy agendas (European, national, regional and local) … dealing with issues of training, competence and recognition, as well as furthering pedagogical, relational and methodological approaches to youth work practice." (AA.VV. 2010: 2).

Figure 6: Layered cross-sectoral collaboration and the role of youth work
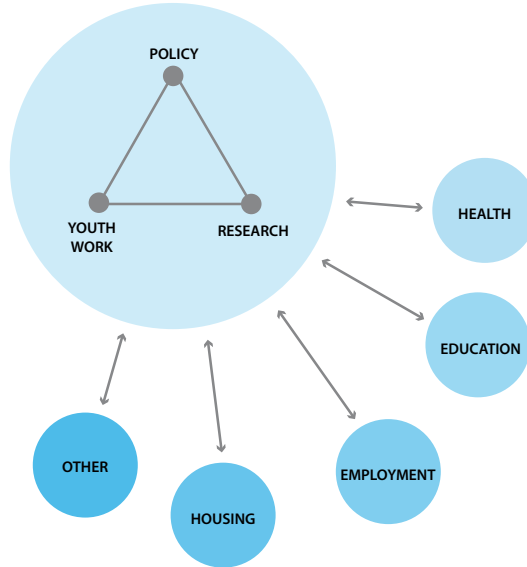

b. In this version, youth work(ers) are understood as an equal partner working side by side with a department, ministry or agency. This would imply a more complex multichannel and bilateral collaboration. And it would imply more independence for youth work, but, at the same time, arguably, from an even "weaker" position in the sense that all the "equal partners" have in fact a stable legislative and financial background for their co-operative actions, except youth work(ers). At the same time, it would seem odd to exclude youth work's contribution and identity from the conjoint contribution of the youth sector as a whole, thus dismantling the "magic triangle" of youth work, youth policy and youth research, or to give it an equivalent role as the other policy domains (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Multichannel cross-sectoral collaboration and the role of youth work
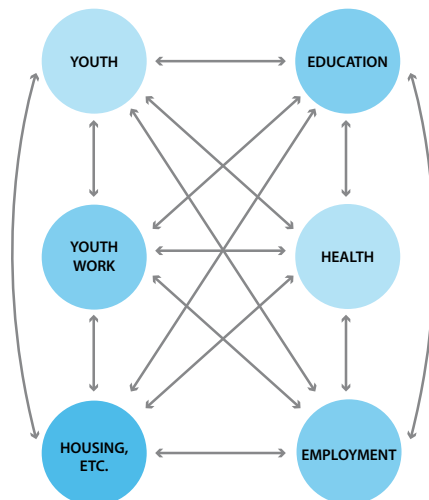
c. The third type of role for youth work would be as a moderator between young people themselves and all sectors involved in youth-relevant policy design and implementation. This moderator role, besides being not necessarily desired by the youth workers, can easily become a voluntary or involuntary filter of young people. This is so in the sense that only those reached by youth work would have the opportunity to get their message, context and views across.

Figure 8: Two types of moderator roles of youth work in cross-sectoral collaboration
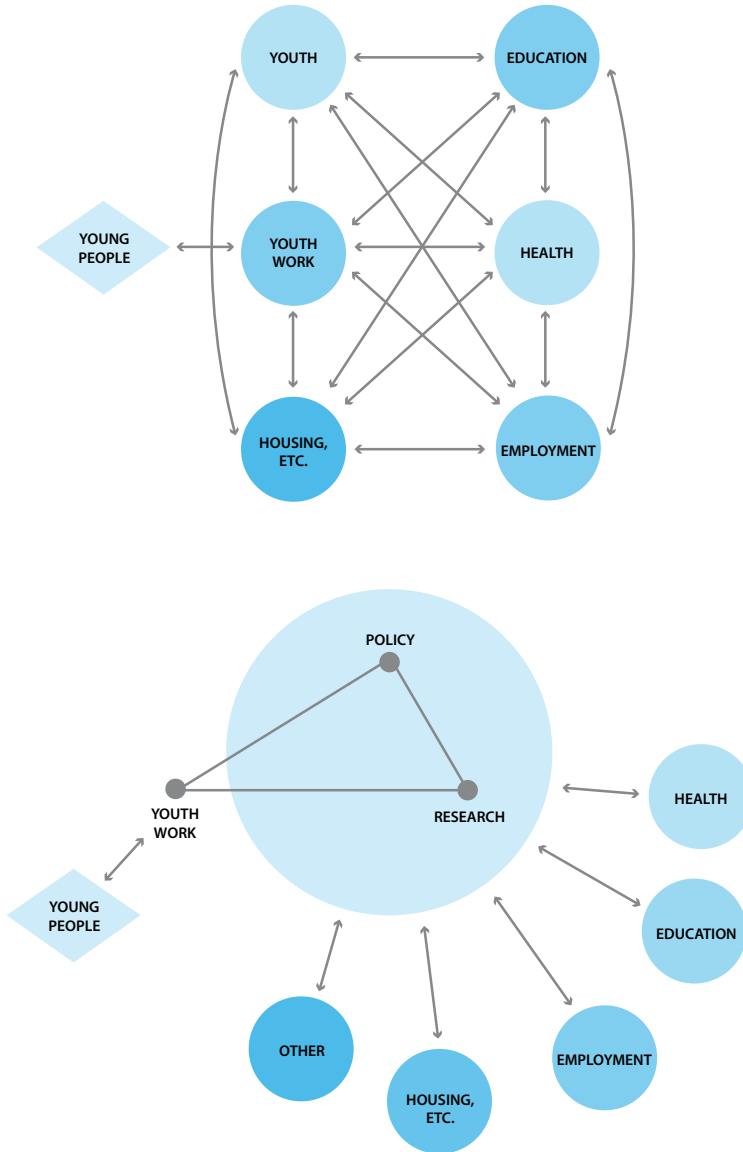
The position actually taken by youth workers in these three systems is dependent on many factors. At the country level we find different welfare systems, particular positions of the youth sector in the governmental hierarchies and also the specificities of the structure of the youth sectors themselves. At the youth sector level, we find the types of cross-sectoral youth policy (co-operation, collaboration, co-ordination, etc.), the degree of formalisation and legality of cross-sectoral practices, and the types of agents involved in those practices. And finally, at the individual level we find professional motivation, identity and recognition.

Concluding remarks

The increased visibility and importance given to cross-sectoral co-operation as expressed in the declarations of the two European Youth Work Conventions are clear and salutary. Although the most important issues and obstacles to the successful development, adjustment and evolution of youth work have not changed dramatically, the discourse in the 2nd Declaration is much more constructive and optimistic – towards solutions and the future, and towards genuine co-operation. It is affirmative rather then defensive. And although, due to the nature of the document, it does not specify procedures, or develop unequivocal definitions or classifications of youth work, it goes way beyond a wish list. Big steps were made towards internal consensus. It has grown to be a matured declaration.

> There are inevitably tensions around youth work engaging with the agendas of others. There are always risks of being instrumentalised. However, the Convention agreed that youth work needs to strengthen connections with other sectors working with young people. The starting point is to jointly identify mutual objectives and opportunities for working together. Youth workers should be conscious of their own quality and importance and maintain their value base. (AA.VV. 2015a)

There are, however, some inevitable tensions in co-operating with others or in others' agendas (AA.VV. 2015a). These tensions are from various levels, which is also visible in the declaration. One strong but invisible tension is, as was presented at the beginning of this article, the ideology behind the *modus operandi* of youth workers and researchers. In the binary world of structure versus agency, these youth team players tend to fall into different categories. This has implications in all the knowledge accumulated and exchanged, and in the level of synergies between the two actors.

A second tension, explicit in both declarations, lies between those who are policy makers or policy executors and youth workers. Here, the fear of instrumentalisation of youth work is prominent and connected with issues of professional identity and the distinctiveness of the youth work profession. Although this concern is understandable, it is incompatible with the idea of a youth sector composed of a "team", where all participants are indispensable in their own way, where they collectively contribute to the same and shared goals, and where each one of them puts aside their putative protagonist role, for the sake of, at least some, common "goals". The goalkeeper and the striker are equally important. The tension between those who are policy makers or policy executors and those who are youth workers is evidently a two-way street (through the discussion of the declarations developed in this chapter, analytical prevalence was given to the tension acknowledged by youth workers in

this respect.) It is also, in a way, inescapable. As such, the first step in dealing with and surpassing these tensions is acknowledging and discussing them. Only by recognising – independently of the differences – each participant's (such as youth worker, policy maker, youth researchers, young people, etc.) legitimacy to follow his or her own specific topic, interest or path into the ultimate goal of improving of young people's lives, can this be achieved. I hope, with this article, to have made a small contribution to the above-mentioned acknowledgement and discussion.

It is necessary to promote the interdependency within the youth sector, rather than the internal competition. This interdependency is important to recognise, and to fill with channels of communication, exchange and co-operation. In the process of this interdependency, the frontiers between the different roles become simultaneously clearer and shared, in the best interests of young people.

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Chapter 37

"Participation and civic dialogue" through the prism of public policy in France

Jean-Claude Richez

The Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention once again underscored the central role of youth participation and civic dialogue by stating these two principles:

▶ "the development of youth work can only be taken further when young people get actively involved from the beginning at all levels – European, national, regional and local", which raises the question of the place young people have or are allowed to have, or the role they assume in the decision-making process;

▶ "organisations in youth work working with and for young people need to be recognised and involved at all levels as partners in civic dialogue concerned with the development of youth work", which presupposes the existence of genuine civic dialogue.

From a French perspective, significant progress appears to have been made in these two areas, at every level of decision making, even if it only really becomes noticeable in the long term. It is a fairly lengthy process from the time when the decision to implement a youth participation policy is taken until significant effects are observed in the social and political fields. All the more insofar as these policies are a serious challenge to the existing political culture, which generally leaves little room for young people and civil society.

Youth participation and the state

The issue of youth participation in decision making was put on the agenda at state level in France with the Priorité jeunesse plan in 2013. As project 12, it is one of 13 large-scale projects that have been launched. The general aim is "to strengthen youth representation in the public sphere", as part of a new perspective on democratic living. The idea is to "encourage and support dialogue with young people so that they are seen as stakeholders and sources of solutions on subjects that concern them"; Action 41 involves taking stock of "youth dialogue and participation in the public sphere at the level of the different ministerial departments, to foster dialogue, consultation and the involvement of young people in public decision making".[245]

Indeed, several clear directives along these lines have been issued by the Prime Minister's Office. On 19 September 2013, for example:

> The Prime Minister's Office wishes the next Interministerial Youth Committee to be reformatted to closely involve young people in the Committee's work. It requests the ministries to give thought to actions that could be organised in addition to the Ministers' meeting and to submit suggestions as soon as possible to the Directorate of Youth, non-formal Education and Voluntary Organisations (DJEPVA).[246]

A few months later, on 3 December 2013, after a similar meeting, the following statement was issued:

> The Prime Minister's Office reminds all concerned that youth organisations are eager to take part in the work done by the ministries in connection with the youth action plan. It asks the ministries to involve them more. It wishes to seal a pact of mutual trust with young people.[247]

The IYC document of 21 February 2013 informed the different ministries of the basic principles of good practice and how to implement them:

- no consultation without it being possible for young people to address issues directly with the public authorities or among themselves;

- while the young people's opinion is purely advisory, the response proposed by the decision makers must be well explained and give reasons;

- means must be made available (possibility of holding meetings, expert contributions, recourse to direct consultation or opinion polls, hearings, study missions, etc.) to foster thinking and civic dialogue, just as they are for social dialogue.[248]

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245. Interministerial Youth Committee (IYC), Priorité jeunesse, 21 February 2013, see www.jeunes.gouv.fr/actualites/priorite-jeunesse/article/comite-interministeriel-de-la-5540, accessed 5 April 2017.

246. General Secretariat of the Government, report of the interministerial meeting held on Thursday 19 September 2013, with Mr de Gaudemar, education adviser to the Prime Minister's Office, as the Chair.

247. Report of the interministerial meeting held at 11 a.m. on Tuesday 3 December 2013, with Mr de Gaudemar as the Chair.

248. www.jeunes.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/CIJ_Rapport_21_fevrier_2013.pdf, p. 59.

This approach, inaugurated in 2013, was followed up in another form at the third meeting of the IYC in 2015. Instead of relying on young people to contribute to the thought process at the level of each ministry, where the results were more successful in some departments than in others, preference was given to the organisation of Youth Meetings in five regions, on specific themes, with the Ministry of Youth and the ministers concerned, in conjunction with the national co-ordination of youth movements and non-formal education (Comité pour les relations Nationales et internationales des Associations de Jeunesse et d'Education Populaire – CNAJEP) and the French Youth Forum (Forum français de la jeunesse – FFJ). These meetings mobilised about a thousand young people: upper secondary pupils, students, young people enrolled in local youth assistance schemes (missions locales), young civic service volunteers, young adults involved with the Child Welfare Service (Aide sociale à l'enfance – ASE). They produced 150 questions that then served as a basis for the work of the IYC. The young people who participated were there more to listen and to question rather than to build something together. The outcome of this approach remains to be seen.

Interviews we conducted on the occasion of the first IYC meeting in 2013 with leaders of the FFJ and the youth and non-formal education movements represented by the CNAJEP particularly highlighted their attachment to:

- upstream consultation, from the very first stages in the development of a proposed action, and the proper circulation of information and documents, to be sent out with the invitation to participate reasonably far in advance;

- participation not only in taking stock of results, but also in monitoring the implementation and assessment of the projects;

- sustainability of the actions taken in the long term, not just – to quote the CNAJEP – the mere statement that "you have to have young people involved, because it is important", without providing the context of the objectives;

- a geographical breakdown of the approach at the regional level;

- responses to their questions, rather than simply asking for ideas: "Not just to be listened to, but also to be heard";

- transparency of the criteria used to choose the youth representatives within the various working bodies.

(Richez J.-C. 2014)

Together, these proposals form a pattern, if not of criticism as to the approach, at least of doubts about the conditions of its implementation. Beyond that, they demonstrate the interest of youth movements in this type of approach and what their expectations are.

Civic dialogue

Where civic dialogue is concerned the situation is not quite so clear. It is true that when it comes to developing European youth policies responsibility for the open consultation method is now borne by the CNAJEP, which co-ordinates all the youth and non-formal education movements, comprising almost 80 associations at the national level, and no longer by the ministry responsible for youth affairs. This is a sign of real progress towards the recognition of youth associations and the development of a civic dialogue approach.

Furthermore, after a long period on the sidelines the principle of a Civic Dialogue Charter has been revived at the national level. The charter, a project originally launched in 2000-01, then put on the back burner, was not taken up again until 2013, but was signed on 14 February 2014 by the state, the voluntary movement and the major national networks of local and regional government authorities (regions, *départements*, municipalities, cities). Not until September 2015, however, did the Prime Minister send out a circular asking the Prefects, who represent the state at the regional and *département* levels, to "encourage the different levels of authority to adopt local charters aimed at organising the consultations and work together with the various stakeholders to build the public policies our society needs and let grassroots initiatives resonate in unison with them".[249] It is worth noting that in the first project, developed at the national level, the local and regional authorities were not consulted.

Following the signature of the Civic Dialogue Charter in early 2014 and the Prime Minister's circular, issued in the autumn of 2015, few local and regional authorities actually signed it: the Regional Councils of Pays de la Loire and Franche-Comté, the Meurthe-et-Moselle General Council and 20-odd municipalities such as Avignon, Bordeaux and Reims.[250] This shows that at the different territorial levels it is not so easy to engage in civic dialogue with the voluntary sector, and particularly with youth associations. The fact that it was so difficult to set up the local and regional youth conferences provided for in the Youth Priority plan confirms this. The plan aimed to encourage civic dialogue by bringing the state, local authorities and associations together at the regional level. Only one conference was organised, in Guadeloupe, where it met twice.[251]

Introducing a policy of civic dialogue is no easy matter in a country where the political culture has very largely developed without civil society, without recognising any intermediate level between the citizen and the state, in the spirit of the well-known "Le Chapelier" law of 14 February 1791, a direct legacy of the French revolution that prohibited any form of intermediate body: "Henceforth there is only the particular interest of each individual, and the general interest. No one shall inspire in citizens

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249. Prime Minister's circular of 29 December 2015.
250. High Council for Voluntary Associations (Haut conseil à la vie associative – HCVA), January 2015. The previous version of the Civic Dialogue Charter, adopted in 2001, had been signed by 10 regions and 30-odd municipalities, including Saint Nazaire, Aix-en-Provence, Lille, Rennes, Roubaix, Angers.
251. See www.regionguadeloupe.fr/actualites-et-agendas/tout-lagenda/detail/actualites/2eme-conference-regionale-permanente-de-la-jeunesse, accessed 5 April 2017.

an intermediate interest or separate them from the official authorities by a corporate spirit".[252]

Furthermore, and to make matters worse, these are all top-down initiatives, the fruit of decisions of the central government imposed on all stakeholders in the Jacobin centralist tradition that ignores, or has difficulty acknowledging, any bottom-up initiative, making it difficult for any independent activity on the part of civil society and especially young people to gain recognition. For young people, the situation is made even worse by the weakness of the independent youth movements. In France, there are primarily pro-youth movements known as "youth and non-formal education movements" that, other than in the principles they profess, have generally not made much room for young people in the past, being run as they are mainly by adults over 40 years of age. This situation has started to change in recent years. It is quite revealing in this respect that at the European and international level it should be the CNAJEP – the co-ordinator of these movements – that represents young people in France.

Only recently, in 2012, did the FFJ emerge. It brings together only "organisations managed and run by young people" and aims to provide "a space where young people represent themselves at the national level, but also a forum for debate and action on all the issues facing our society, and one which must have a place in defining public policies".[253] The FFJ includes students' and upper secondary pupils' unions, mutual organisations, associations, youth movements and political parties. It has gained recognition as a legitimate voice for young people largely thanks to the government's initiative to involve young people more in the joint development of public youth policies under pillar 41 of the Youth Priority plan. One obvious drawback remains the fact that the FFJ has no real branches at the local and regional levels.

Youth participation policies at the initiative of the regional and local authorities

The regions in France have certain competences in youth matters. These were increased by the recent territorial reform.[254] They have all been engaged in very active youth policies since the late 1990s and especially the first decade of this century, placing young people and youth participation at the heart of their priorities. Regional Youth Councils have sprung up almost everywhere, often in broader-based, innovative forms.

A survey carried out in 2014 by Laurent Lardeux, an analyst at INJEP, revealed that every region in mainland France and France's overseas territories had consultation bodies (Regional Youth Councils, Youth Parliaments, Youth Forums, a Regional Youth

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252. Explanatory memorandum before the National Assembly, *Le Moniteur universel*, 15 June 1791.
253. See http://forumfrancaisjeunesse.fr, accessed 5 April 2017.
254. Law of 7 August 2015 on the New Territorial Organisation of the Republic.
255. Now called "Val de Loire".

Conference in the Centre region[255]). The study also identified numerous experiments to involve young people directly in the development of policies concerning them:

▶ regional budgets for upper secondary school participation in Burgundy, Île-de-France, Nord-Pas-de-Calais, Poitou-Charentes, *lycées* or upper secondary schools being the responsibility of the regions in France;

▶ definition of all or some youth policies with young people: development of "autonomy packs" in the Pays de la Loire and in Auvergne, employment pacts in Poitou and Nord-Pas-de-Calais, a regional youth scheme in the Centre region;

▶ monitoring of the implementation of youth policies in the Burgundy Region.

In all, almost 100 initiatives were identified. Regardless of their format, or even their relevance, Lardeux (2015) emphasises in his conclusion that "what really matters is that attention is being paid to the linkage, the intermeshing, bringing the two levels together in an informal way, and the negotiations inherent in relations between these two levels (regional policy and youth policy)."

The Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention also calls for no youth participation without "independent spaces for putting it into practice". For almost 25 years now, local and regional authorities have endeavoured to develop such spaces, for example by setting up Youth Councils at the municipal, regional and *département* levels. As is pointed out in the declaration, these different levels are essential, for "youth work is done mainly at the local level, which takes responsibility for it in the end".

Historically, municipalities were the instigators of the first experiments in developing spaces for youth participation, in the form of Youth Councils backed by local authorities, often in partnership with non-formal education movements. The trend developed from the mid-1980s onwards. From 10 or so in 1985, their number grew to 35 in 1987, 160 in 1989 and 200 in 1990. It can be considered that in the early 1990s councils for children and youth went from having an experimental status to being something generally accepted: there were 740 in 1994 and 940 in 1997. In the five years from 1989 to 1994 their number increased fivefold. As early as 1989 the state took an interest and encouraged their development. In 1987, local authorities and non-formal education movements formed two associations federating these local initiatives: the National Association of Children's Councils (Association Nationale des Conseils d'Enfants – ANCME) and the Cities Convention for Youth Councils (Convention des Villes pour les Conseils de Jeunes – CVCJ). The two networks would merge in 1991 to form the National Association of Children's and Youth Councils (Association Nationale des Conseils d'Enfants et de Jeunes – ANACEJ) (Richez 2012).

Today the ANACEJ numbers "2 500 councils and participation mechanisms in France", or even 3 000,[256] but many of these initiatives are children's councils in small rural communities. There are about 400 of these. These bodies represent some very different realities and function in different ways. To quote the Declaration of the 2nd European

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256. Figures supplied by ANACEJ, available at http://anacej.asso.fr/participations-et-conseils/les-conseils-dispositifs-de-participation-enfants-jeunes-jeunesse/les-territoires, accessed 5 April 2017.

Youth Work Conference, they are as many places where "the imagination, initiative, participation and desires of young people are cultivated", as there are places where "through activities, games, pastimes, militancy, exchange of information, mobility, voluntary work, co-operation and debate" young people come to understand "their place in their group and in the social networks and to take a critical interest in things", regardless of their professed aims.

Whether they are devised as spaces of civic education, involvement in local life, input for local authorities or, more rarely, joint policy making, these youth councils only really work if they are also sources of action, initiatives and project development. This principle was established at a very early stage in the history of the Youth Councils. Marie José Chombart de Lauwe, a researcher and psycho-sociologist, wrote in 1987 in the preface to "13 years old and already a citizen!", which recounts the pioneering experience of the Schiltigheim Children's Council: "Let us help them [children] to become makers of change at their own level by involving them in carrying out, and even initiating, projects, monitoring their implementation and demanding results" (Jodry 1987). This is a prerequisite that harks back to one of the central theses of the American philosopher John Dewey, who believed in experimentation as the very foundation of democracy (Dewey 2010; Cometti 2016).

Numerous initiatives of youth and non-formal education movements have also been developed at a municipal level, often with the support of the local authorities. Today, for example, the National Network of Juniors Associations spans 2 000 associations with 10 000 young members. They bring together, around a project, young people between 12 and 18 years of age who would otherwise be too young to form an association. They are assisted by the Jets d'encre association, the Ligue de l'enseignement, the National Federation of socio-cultural centres and the French Federation of Youth Centres (Maisons de jeunes et de la culture – MJC).[257] Again, with the logistical support of the Ligue de l'enseignement, a powerful network of student associations has been developed in the universities. Meanwhile, Léo Lagrange, another national non-formal education network, has developed 13 youth project support teams and 11 youth initiative incubators. A very large number of youth spaces have been opened up over the last 15 years in many places, run either by the local authorities or, very often, by non-formal education movements; they are often places for autonomous youth activities rather than genuinely autonomous youth groups. The number of youth associations run by young people for young people has also increased substantially.

Young people are creating numerous associations, particularly focusing on culture, living together and local democracy. In Paris, for example, half the associations are less than 10 years old and most of them were founded by young people under 30 (Renault-Tinacci 2015). These associations, which are inventing, often with the aid of digital technology, new ways of energising and participating in the democratic debate, generally take little time to be recognised by the authorities at the local

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257. See www.juniorassociation.org, accessed 5 April 2017.

and national level. Some of them were present on 30 January 2016 at the La France s'engage forum, organised by the Office of the President of the Republic, and they also have the support of the City of Paris, especially the Paris Association Crossroads (Carrefour des associations parisiennes – CAP) and the association centres (Maisons des associations – MDA). As such, they play their part as actors in civic dialogue.

This phenomenon does not only concern young people from economically, socially and culturally privileged backgrounds who are organised and accustomed to public affairs, as is perfectly clear from the survey carried out by Chafik Hbila for *Résoville* on youth participation in popular neighbourhoods in eight cities in the west of France (Hbila 2012; Résoville 2012). Half of the eight popular neighbourhoods concerned had independent youth associations. They are often run by young people from the neighbourhood who have made good, in a spirit of solidarity with their younger counterparts. Their commitment is part of what anthropologist Fabien Truong perfectly describes as "the ordinary fight for self-esteem" and learning "to navigate between the multiple boundaries of the social world" (2015).

These associations are often very combative and their relations with the municipal authorities strained. Patricia Loncle (2008) has said of them:

> They are associations which have no qualms about pointing an accusing finger at the municipal authorities and severely criticising the public services active in the neighbourhoods. Their aim is to upset the established order, so they can easily become an embarrassment to local authorities, most of whom readily return blow for blow, especially by challenging the realism of their proposals, their representativeness and their legitimacy.

And as INJEP researcher Régis Cortesero (2012: 107) pointed out in the *Résoville* study:

> there is something ironic about wanting to encourage young people to get involved because they are under-represented and not enough attention is paid to them in public policy, while at the same time asking them, as soon as a disagreement arises, not to be so selfish, to think about other people too, to wait for their efforts to be rewarded because of the pressures of public action, which require everybody's support and obeys a rationale of its own.

Conclusion

Looking back over all the initiatives supported by the state, the regions or the municipalities, even if they generally only very rarely involve young people in political decision making and the degree of independence they are given is limited, as Lardeux (2015) writes in the conclusion to his survey of participation in the regions, which can be extended to the state and local levels, "whether young people are actually involved in decision making or simply play a subordinate role, whatever their degree of participation there is always interaction". This interaction is all the more important in that there are ever more forms of participation. In the end, it encourages the authorities to pay more attention to young people's expectations and lends legitimacy to their involvement. It also encourages the development of more and more spaces for participation, and generates youth movements that help strengthen and renew civil society and impose civic dialogue on the political agenda.

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Conclusions and outlook

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As emphasised in the introduction to this book we, the editorial team, believe that the further development and promotion of youth work as a social practice needs stronger commitment, better infrastructure, instruments and tools as well as creative and innovative ideas that go beyond the status quo and the current limits of the youth field. This view is shared by many experts involved in European youth policy, youth work and youth research, including those who are part of the Think Tank: Friends of European Youth Policy.[258] Some further and deeper reflections on critical issues, as discussed during the two European Youth Work Conventions, have been undertaken in this book. Here, in its final section, we want to invite reflection on further steps to satisfy the needs and aspirations of young people, youth workers, youth leaders and all those involved in youth work practice, be it practitioners, policy makers or researchers.

Political statements, resolutions and recommendations of both the EU and the Council of Europe certainly build a strong basis for further action but are far from sufficient to create a new dynamic around youth work since, necessarily, they reflect the lowest common denominator of currently achievable aims and objectives.[259] One of the (so far three) meetings of the Think Tank: Friends of European Youth Policy was devoted to the question of what is implied by being "avant-garde" in youth policy and youth work. Participants reiterated the need to switch from "defensive energy to creative engagement"; however, the lack of a clear and long-term political vision

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258. The Think Tank: Friends of European Youth Policy is an informal and independent group of up to 30 experts from the youth field (from research, public administration, youth organisations, agencies and institutes) that seeks to analyse, assess, discuss and influence the current state of affairs of youth policy within the European context. Further reading in Council of Europe (2014).

259. A remarkable exception was made in 2002 (!) in the Opinion of the Economic and Social Committee on the "European Commission White Paper: a new impetus for European youth", (COM(2001) 681 final) (2002/C 149/18), in which the Committee stipulates a switch from "Impetus" to "Dynamics", e.g. by adopting a broader conception for an integrated and cross-sectoral youth policy, and sending a clear signal to all forces in society to actively involve young people in the process of building an enlarged and more democratic EU. See http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52002IE0528, accessed 5 April 2017.

relating to themes, priorities, aims and objectives, taking account of the complexity in which youth policy and youth work are situated, demands an even stronger political strategy supported by concrete tools that consolidate and honour past achievements and developments.

A mid- to long-term strategy requires innovation, continuity and coherence. This cannot be achieved through "theme hopping" from one hot topic to the other and operating with a "tick box" mentality. Strong leadership and co-ordination, but with a flexible and open approach of interaction, co-operation and communication must involve all parties, encouraging them to take on responsibilities and commit to playing an active role. A real network structure and fewer ritualised, hierarchical relationships would help to broaden the coalition of partners coming from various professional backgrounds, political sectors and different levels. Diverse forms of co-operation structures will help to develop a sustainable, reliable and efficient network structure while enhancing trust, confidence and another, better communication culture. This would include:

▶ institutional co-operation (ministerial conferences, directors-general meetings, youth working parties, the European Steering Committee on Youth – CDEJ, Advisory Council and Joint Council meetings, etc.);

▶ co-operation of support structures and mechanisms such as the European Youth Forum European Youth Foundation, Erasmus+: Youth in Action National Agencies, SALTO Resource Centres, EURODESK, the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency, the European Youth Card Association, and the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership;

▶ informal co-operation in platforms and fora such as the Pool of European Youth Researchers, the correspondents network to the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy, the European Platform Learning Mobility, the Research-based Analysis and Monitoring of Erasmus+: Youth in Action programme network, the Think Tank: Friends of European Youth Policy, the former expert group on recognition of non-formal learning and of youth work, the European Confederation of Youth Clubs, Professional Open Youth Work in Europe, etc.

The Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention explores some ideas on how to find and create a common ground for youth work in Europe. It states:

– There is a need for mutual development and the exchange of practices in youth work in Europe. Peer learning and peer review exercises on youth work will help to develop practices in and policies on youth work. Co-operation and exchange among youth work actors across Europe requires support for regular platforms for dialogue and sustainable networks and partnerships.

– Further development of the concepts and practice of youth work are required. Youth work has to find strategies to work on the current and emerging challenges faced by young people in Europe. Youth work has to renew its practice and strategies according to the changes and trends in society and politics. And youth work has to reach out to those target groups which are most affected by the social situation and living conditions of young people.

– Instruments at a European level are important for the development of youth work practice on other levels. There is a need to support the capacity of youth work to respond to new challenges and opportunities posed by new technologies and digital media.

Summing up, the elements of a future vision, bearing in mind a need for greater convergence in the youth field, would include, *inter alia*:

▶ comprehensive review processes and peer-learning systems;

▶ joint programmes for exchange, pilot projects, youth work structures and youth NGOs;

▶ support structures for research and development;[260]

▶ building on this, a European charter on youth work with commonly defined standards.

In concrete terms, the youth sector has to think about closer co-operation and joint activities through the establishment of the following structures that could support the search for and creation of a common ground:

▶ a European youth agency for the development of youth work;

▶ an advanced European training strategy and a Master's in European youth studies;

▶ a European summer academy for youth policy and youth work.

In particular, these last three elements deserve further explanation. A European youth agency for the development of youth work would function as a body that is responsible for knowledge gathering, information provision, exchange of good practice, promotion of youth work, standard setting and quality assurance, including education and training offers for youth workers. It should have a similar function to other European agencies such as CEDEFOP, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training[261] and the European Training Foundation.[262] Taking into account already existing structures in the youth field with similar functions, a European youth agency is not necessarily meant to be a completely new "body": it could be based on a centralised model with various branches or a completely decentralised but co-ordinated network structure with different tasks and responsibilities, including the current SALTO Resource Centres, Eurodesk, the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency, the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy,

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260. For example, the above-mentioned Research-based Analysis and Monitoring of Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme network produces reliable evidence to better understand processes and outcomes in youth work and non-formal education and started recently to look into the competence development of youth workers who have participated in training schemes in the framework of Erasmus+: Youth in Action. See www.researchyouth.net, accessed 5 April 2017. http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52002IE0528, accessed 5 April 2017.

261. CEDEFOP is one of the EU's decentralised agencies. Founded in 1975 and based in Greece since 1995, it supports the development of European vocational education and training (VET) policies and contributes to their implementation. The agency is helping the European Commission, EU member states and social partners to develop the right European VET policies.

262. The European Training Foundation is an EU agency that helps transition and developing countries harness the potential of their human capital through the reform of education, training and labour market systems, and in the context of the EU's external relations policy. Based in Turin, Italy, it has been operational since 1994.

the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership, etc. The European youth agency should be a joint project of both the European Commission and the Council of Europe.

As an essential activity the European youth agency could offer an advanced European training strategy including education and training schemes for European youth workers and youth leaders and further education and training of trainers. The training scheme would go beyond the current European training strategy as part of the Erasmus+: Youth in Action programme and become a support and resource structure for quality youth work at European and at national (respectively regional and local) levels; it would be related to the National Agencies of Erasmus+: Youth in Action, the SALTO Resource Centres, and the two European Youth Centres in Budapest and Strasbourg as residential European training centres. The current Training Course on Youth Policy provided by SALTO Resource Centre Training and Cooperation at Jugend für Europa, the German National Agency of Erasmus+: Youth in Action in co-operation with the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership should be part of the education and training plan. Another option could be the revitalisation of the short course within the curriculum development programme that anticipated (though never operationalised) an MA in European Youth Studies (MAEYS). The short course was run successfully in 2011 and provided a hybrid and pioneering learning context for 30 high-level youth experts from all sides of the youth "triangle". For various reasons it was never run again. Obviously, a European training strategy as developed under Erasmus+: Youth in Action must be integrated or at least linked to this project.

When talking about the education and training of youth workers it is obvious to link the debate to competence development of youth workers: education and training systems of youth workers vary widely across Europe and consequently the competences needed to do youth work are broad and diverse. The work on the competence profiles of youth workers will need co-ordination and exchange, in view of the various activities in the framework of the European training strategy, Youthpass (Erasmus+: Youth in Action, SALTOs, etc.) and the Council of Europe's recommendation on youth work including the expected "mapping" exercise of youth worker competences and related education and training "systems". It makes sense to think about a supra-institutional approach in mapping these systems, identifying competence profiles and in developing education and training strategies. Again, a link to a European youth agency would offer synergies and an umbrella for a platform of exchange on competences, recognition and validation of competences, etc. The former expert group on recognition of youth work and of non-formal learning could be integrated into such a platform.

The idea of organising regularly a European youth work summer academy has to be further explored; the academy would be offering a series of colloquia on issues such as young people in contemporary Europe, in the form of high-level events that discuss burning issues of youth policy and youth work together with researchers, policy makers and practitioners from inside and outside the youth sector, not to forget young people themselves from various backgrounds, who need to play a key role in such events. A prospective strategic partner in the running of such an academy would be the Think Tank: Friends of European Youth Policy and the partnership between the EU and the Council of Europe in the youth field.

As mentioned earlier, these potential activities have to be seen as a follow-up to the 2nd European Youth Work Convention and its declaration and – in broader terms – with the 1st European Youth Work Declaration, which states:

> The Convention requests that, on the basis of this Declaration, the European Union, the Council of Europe and their member states, and the current and next trio Presidencies of the EU should build up an agenda, an action plan and the necessary resources for its realisation.

This should help to pave the way to the 3rd European Youth Work Convention, which will most likely take place in 2020 in Germany.

The editorial team of this publication is looking forward to a lively debate about the next steps to take on the way to deepening and broadening the common ground of youth work while maintaining its creative diversity. In the spirit of the conventions, over time, we hope to make a world of difference.

Reference

Council of Europe (2014), "2020 – what do YOU see?", Perspectives on Youth #1, available at http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/issue-1, accessed 5 April 2017.

Appendices

Declaration of the 1st European Youth Work Convention

Ghent, Belgium, 7-10 July 2010

Preamble

The 1st European Youth Work Convention took place under the Belgium EU Presidency in July 2010. Nine years after the European Union launched the White Paper on Youth under the previous Presidency in Belgium, the youth work and youth policy community returned to Ghent. For the first time, the focus was exclusively on youth work. The Convention sought to connect the past, present and future thinking and practice of youth work. Over 400 participants from 50 countries took part in an intensive and robust debate – through plenary sessions, 'youth work in action' workshops, visits to local youth projects and thematic seminars over three days. The Convention was preceded by a conference exploring the history of youth work in Europe, a third such event following two previous seminars in Blankenberge, Belgium. It has produced the following ideas. This Declaration is addressed to the Ministers responsible for youth for the 50 countries belonging to the European Union and/or the Council of Europe, other European institutions, and political structures concerned with young people at national, regional and local government, and of course the youth work field and young people themselves.

History

There are many histories of youth work in Europe as well as a more recent history of European-level youth work. It is characterised by diversity, tension and development. It has been informed and led in many different ways – through social movements, youth organisations and associations, by faith groups, the non-governmental sector and national, regional and local youth policy. It has engaged with different groups of young people, often distinguished by social class, religious belief, political affiliation, or cultural interests. It has been organised in different ways, at times led by adults, at others co-managed or self-managed by young people themselves.

Youth work today

Youth work is both complex and often misunderstood on account of that complexity. Put simply, however, it does two things. It provides space for association, activity, dialogue and action. And it provides support, opportunity and experience for young people as they move from childhood to adulthood. In today's Europe, it is guided and governed by principles of participation and empowerment, values of human rights and democracy, and anti-discrimination and tolerance. It is informed by a range of policies and research knowledge. It is delivered by both volunteers and paid workers. It is established through a voluntary relationship with young people. It is financed and managed in a variety of ways. It is quintessentially a social practice, working between young people and the societies in which they live. For these reasons, it has had to accommodate and deal with a range of tensions generated by this relationship. These include reconciling youth research, policy and practice, making sense of different youth policy agendas (European, national, regional and local), establishing a position in cross-sectorial activity, dealing with issues of training, competence and recognition, as well as furthering pedagogical, relational and methodological approaches to youth work practice.

Youth work is defined in the Council resolution on a renewed framework for European co-operation in the youth field (2010-2018) as

> a broad term covering a large scope of activities of a social, cultural, educational or political nature both by, with and for young people. Increasingly, such activities also include sports and services for young people. Youth work belongs to the area of 'out-of-school' education as well as specific leisure time activities, managed by professional or voluntary youth workers and youth leaders and is based on non-formal learning processes and on voluntary participation.

During the Convention it was defined more briefly as the provision of 'space and opportunity for young people to shape their own futures'. Whatever the definitional debate, it is not contested that different forms of youth work engage with different young people, use different methodologies, address different issues and operate in different contexts. Within this frame of groups, methods, issues and contexts, youth work practice adapts, unfolds and develops over time.

The focus of attention at the Convention has been contemporary youth work and youth work in the future – drawing from the lessons of the past. In the context of the changed and changing life contexts of young people, numerous questions were raised about whether or not youth work needed to change, the relationship between youth work and youth policy, and the contribution of youth work to the wider circumstances of young people. Specific challenges in the debates included the role of youth work in addressing youth unemployment, issues of quality and qualifications in youth work, and the forms of youth work required for living together in diverse societies. Participants invested significant energy on issues such as the accessibility, standards, recognition, resourcing and impact of youth work.

Youth work and policy priorities

There remains a relatively limited understanding and engagement between youth work on the one hand and politics and (youth) policy on the other. Politicians may need to establish a better knowledge of youth work, but youth workers also have to secure a stronger grasp of how policy is made.

Where policy development is concerned, authorities have tended to follow their own priorities and agendas rather than those of youth work and those of young people. Greater links between 'top down' and 'bottom up' priorities are needed. Youth workers should be involved in policy-making discussions in broader policy fields which affect the lives of young people; they should also be consulted on policy that may have more indirect effects on young people. It is important that policy development within the youth field and beyond engages both with organised and less organised young people. Youth organisations play a significant role in these processes.

Youth workers and young people should be involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of youth policy. Specific initiatives in the youth field should be constructed on the principles and values of youth work: rights-based, opportunity-focused, with a positive orientation, and based on equality of access and involvement.

The 'structured dialogue' developed in recent years and dialogue with national, regional and local youth councils, as well as the European Youth Forum and the Advisory Council of the Council of Europe, are both illustrations of the progress that has taken place in recent years. However, such processes need to be strengthened in the future through broadening the base of this dialogue and more application of practices of co-management.

Position and cross-sectorial co-operation

Youth work has, historically, arguably operated in isolation. It is now expected, increasingly, to engage in far greater professional collaboration within a broader framework of cross-sectorial policy development in the youth field. Cross-sectorial co-operation takes different forms: between educational sectors, between agencies and policy domains affecting young people (such as health, employment or justice), between funding sources, and at different levels of administration. Few would disagree that more communication, co-ordination and co-operation is required. Yet, for youth work to engage better in such processes, there is the challenge of its identity and a fear of instrumentalisation. Youth work can sometimes be the weak partner within such arrangements, producing concerns about the erosion of its distinctive contribution to young people's lives.

Such co-operation makes the sharing of good practice and the development of more collaborative practice more possible. Youth work is, of course, well-placed to enable contact and intervention with young people. It can, however, feel that its privileged position and relationship with young people can be compromised through joint

working with agencies such as the police or vocational training providers, even if ultimately goals are shared between the agencies and young people themselves. The trust and credibility youth workers command with young people can be rapidly undermined unless the 'rules of engagement' are carefully negotiated on an equal basis and from a starting point of mutual respect.

Information, impact and effect

Precisely because of the diversity of youth work, there needs to be an equivalently diverse approach to identifying the contribution it makes both to young people and to society. Classical evaluation tools need to be supplemented by the dissemination of good practice on which others in the field can reflect. There is a relatively thin knowledge base on youth work. Despite the development of the European Knowledge Centre on Youth Policy, other forms of collection, dissemination and translation of information on youth work principles, policy and practice are required; not all youth workers can read English! There are information resources at a European level, but there is a need for a stronger guide to their location and accessibility; it was suggested that youthwork.eu represents a promising start.

Only with better information and knowledge on youth work can its impact be better understood, disseminated and evaluated. Both quantitative and qualitative 'evidence' needs to be collected, collated and analysed.

The objectives of such information gathering are to promote the visibility of youth work, foster quality in practice, and thereby enhance the credibility of youth work. At another level, it is important to secure evidenced information on the living conditions of young people as a basis for strategic and operational thinking about youth work and youth policy. Both youth surveys and youth monitoring are relevant to this need. Through these and other mechanisms youth work can really 'start where young people are at'.

In relation to the outcomes and impact of youth work, the proclaimed 'triangle' of youth research, policy and practice needs to be enlarged into a square incorporating youth organisations and young people. Perspectives from all sides need to be a platform for any consideration of impact. A mapping exercise or inventory of the forms and volume of youth work in member states is urgently required both to understand and broadcast current examples of good practice and to establish the strategic direction for youth work in the future.

Youth work for all and in diversity

Diversity in youth work is linked to accessibility for all. The Convention stressed the importance of 'low threshold' practice that provided an open door. However, 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. Furthermore, there is, today, a stronger case for role modelling through strengthening diversity within youth work organisations and youth work administrations.

Youth work must avoid seeing any group of young people solely as targets for inclusion and participation and more as partners in activism for the promotion of diversity in society. In the context of new inter-faith and intercultural conditions in Europe, some older forms of youth work such as community development and community action need to be reflected on and adapted to new times.

The quality of practice

Youth work is an unusual professional practice in that it is delivered both by voluntary and paid workers. There is no clear division of labour in the roles played by either; indeed, both can be found in virtually all arenas of youth work's diverse activities. Their relationship is often complementary and mutually supportive. However, because of their differences, there have been particular challenges around issues of quality, competence, and recognition. This has often distilled into a clash between professionalisation and professionalism. It is a complex debate, with concern about exclusivity if a certain level of qualification becomes the sole threshold of professionalism. While there is no doubt that there is a growing cluster of knowledge, skills and attitudes for doing many aspects of youth work – around, for example, policy, ethics, risk, management, budgeting and practical engagement with young people – these have often been acquired by those with a long experience of voluntary practice. Routes to individual validation through the accreditation of prior learning must therefore be established and respected. This can be achieved through the setting of quality standards and the identification of generic competencies. Such a framework could be developed at the European level and applied through national structures, delivered through flexible education and training systems, as well as self-regulated through a professional code of ethics governing the behaviour of youth workers in their contact with young people.

Competence, training and recognition

Though there may be no need for an homogeneous training system for youth workers, there is a need for a competence-building framework based on approaches to learning such as developing theoretical understanding, practice supervision (and co-supervision), coaching, e-learning, peer learning, observation and assessment. These need to be available over time, with appropriate reflection and follow-up. Just as for young people themselves, youth workers need to engage in recurrent learning in order to deal effectively with the changing circumstances in which they have to work. In order to promote understanding of the increasing youth work practice undertaken in other sectors, as a result of cross-sectorial developments, there is also a case for youth workers spending time learning in other youth research, policy and practice environments. In short, training needs to be flexible, appropriate and incremental. Where possible, its European dimension should be intercultural, transnational, and linked both physically and methodologically to a European programme.

Not only do the necessary resources need to be attached to such provision but there has to be stronger recognition of youth work, both within and outside youth policy structures, if a virtuous circle of quality, competence and improved practice is to be secured. There is an argument for having strategies for the recognition and validation

of youth work at European, national and local, and sometimes organisational levels. Yet whatever tools and instruments for accreditation, certification and recognition are developed, there remain key questions about usage, currency and credibility. These need to be explored and, where necessary, weaknesses acknowledged and addressed. It is likely that such a process needs to set up platforms for dialogue on this front with those from other sectors of the public administration, different levels of youth policy and practice, and the private sector.

Mobility and networking

Exchange between youth workers and young people from different cultures, backgrounds and youth work experiences is important for quality development, for learning and support, for knowledge transfer, and for extending opportunities for developing and implementing youth work at an international level. Though the possibilities for exchange have been enhanced over recent years, there remain obstacles such as finance, language and personal and professional status. There was a call for mobility as a right for all, and therefore mechanisms for dealing with various obstacles need to be developed.

To improve networking and exchange, practitioners from across Europe in all sectors of youth work should have the means and opportunities for dialogue, contact and co-operation, and for those working in particular areas of youth work there should be more specific forms for association. There was also a call for stronger international mobility opportunities for youth workers. The Youth in Action programme goes some way to address these issues, but these need to be taken further. To that end, there should be more discussion of the value of face-to-face contact through international mobility, though there is already a strong consensus on the key elements of impact on youth work practice that derive from such experiences.

Sustainable support and funding

There is a strong imperative to develop a legal framework for youth work that ensures a core budget that guarantees the sustainability of infrastructure, projects and youth work development. This legal framework could require the production of local youth work action plans, identifying the resources needed for delivery from different levels of funding. Multiple funding sources should reflect different levels within the range of youth work provision and should not be played off against each other. There should be clear and transparent criteria for the funding of youth work; both established and new youth work initiatives and organisations should have equal chances of securing these resources.

National governments were held to be primarily responsible for the funding of youth work. European funds were viewed as playing a triple additional role in both the development and implementation of youth work. First, youth programmes at a European level – such as the Youth in Action programme - represent an increasingly critical provision, for social inclusion, youth mobility and active citizenship. Secondly, their distinctive contribution to the lives of young people and to youth workers, and to the conceptualisation of youth work itself, is important in framing and shaping,

as well as supporting new forms of practice. Third, the programmes remain invaluable in 'kick starting' support for youth work activity, and demonstrating its value, in areas where there is little tradition or understanding of such practice. For 2020, the horizon for European strategies within and beyond the youth field, making such guarantees to Europe's young people will be an essential plank for achieving their objectives. Youth work will, however, also have to explore broader sources of funding and youth workers will need improved competence in income generation.

Next Steps

The Convention recognised the responsibility of youth workers themselves to contribute when it can on the agendas outlined above, but they also need enabling politically and financially. At the European level, there is a range of political initiatives and actions in the youth field (and beyond but still affecting young people, youth work and youth policy) taking place over the next year. The content of this Declaration should therefore be taken into account in those debates. The Declaration is intended to encourage the maintenance of attention to youth work and young people within these policy debates. These include:

- ▶ Europe 2020 strategy and its flagship project 'Youth on the Move'
- ▶ The anticipated Recommendation of the Council on the Promotion of Mobility
- ▶ The anticipated Recommendation of the Council on the Recognition of Non-Formal Learning
- ▶ The new generation of programmes that will follow Youth in Action in 2013
- ▶ The preceding debate that will inform the design of the future EU 'youth' programme
- ▶ The further development of non-formal learning dimensions of Europass
- ▶ The new Pathways 2.0 on the validation and recognition of non-formal learning
- ▶ The new training strategy on youth work in Europe within the Youth in Action programme

The 1st European Youth Work Convention, from which this Declaration has emerged, has started the debate on youth work in Europe. The Convention asks that the momentum established should be taken forward within the existing youth policy frameworks of both the European Union and the Council of Europe:

- ▶ The renewed framework for European co-operation in the youth field
- ▶ The Resolution on the youth policy of the Council of Europe

The Convention requests that, on the basis of this Declaration, the European Union, the Council of Europe and their member states, and the current and next trio Presidencies of the EU should build up an agenda, an action plan and the necessary resources for its realisation. The agenda should culminate in a 2nd European Youth Work Convention. To conclude, this Declaration also looks forward to the content and subsequent deliberations of the Resolution on Youth Work of the Council under the Belgium Presidency.

Appendix 2

Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention – Making a world of difference

Brussels, 27-30 April 2015

Introduction

This Declaration, prepared within the framework of the Belgian Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, is addressed to the Member States of the Council of Europe, the multilateral organisations (the European Union, the Council of Europe and the United Nations), other European institutions, and political structures concerned with young people at national, regional and local level, the youth work field and young people themselves.

The 2nd European Youth Work Convention

The 2nd European Youth Work Convention, five years after the first, brought together some 500 participants active in the youth work field. They listened to plenary speeches and presentations, took part in 24 working groups and 20 site visits that created the opportunity to look 'under the hood' at youth work practice that, for them, might be innovative and different, provoking more profound reflection on their own perspectives and practice.

There are multiple claims about the contribution of youth work to the development of young people and society. The keynote speeches and discussions captured the following dimensions of the role and impact of youth work:

- ▶ Advancing democracy, human rights, citizenship, European values, participation, equal opportunities and voice
- ▶ Promoting peace-building, tolerance, intercultural learning; combating radicalisation, preventing extremism
- ▶ Dealing with social and personal ambiguities and change
- ▶ Strengthening positive identities and belonging, agency and autonomy
- ▶ Developing 'Soft' skills, competences and capabilities, cultivating navigational capacities and broadening personal horizons
- ▶ Enabling transitions to 'successful' adulthood, particularly education to working life

- ▶ Cementing social inclusion and cohesion; upholding civil society
- ▶ Engaging in collaborative practice, partnership working and cross-sectorial co-operation

The 1st European Youth Work Declaration celebrated and gave direction to this *diversity* of opportunity, action and experience that may be positively attributed to youth work. Since then, however, the development of youth work in different parts of Europe has been varied. While youth work remains supported, politically and financially, in some countries, it has fallen victim to austerity measures and political indifference in others. Sometimes the claims made for youth work appear to be unconvincing. Youth work, as a result, continues to face challenges of funding, recognition and credibility.

The objective of the 2nd Convention was to identify the *common ground* on which all 'youth work' stands and its relation to wider agendas of concern to public policy and issues facing young people. In the context of 'what brings us together is stronger than what divides us', the expectation from the Convention was to give a new impetus to the political and institutional debate around youth work in Europe, in order to foster further development and stronger recognition.

The social situation of young people in Europe

In many different ways, young people from all backgrounds live in precarious circumstances. Some face pronounced, extended and multiple challenges. All need some level of support, and support in strengthening their autonomy. While enjoying new opportunities enabled through new technologies and digital media, the expansion of educational opportunities, access to information and more, they also face risk and uncertainty. These include qualification inflation, rising unemployment, conflict and war, threats to mental and physical well-being, debt and poverty, social inequality and exclusion, and a lack of suitable housing. There have been simultaneous changes in social and political participation, the scale of early school leaving, inter-generational relations, unintended consequences of austerity and migration, and a growth in extremist perspectives and occasionally behaviour. Youth work in its many forms is often linked to these issues in policy narratives about raising awareness, prevention strategies, and the development and implementation of solutions.

Youth work – Diversity and reality

There is certainly no easy path to finding common ground. Contemporary youth work practice encapsulates street work, open work, project and issue based work, self-organised activity through youth organisations, youth information, exchanges and more. Historically, as the Youth Partnership histories of youth work clearly convey, the origins and trajectories of youth work have been anchored in different ways, with different priorities and goals. The roots of youth work in western and eastern Europe were underpinned by very different values. Youth work has been conceptualised in many different ways. Political commitment to youth work in different Member States has varied considerably and sometimes ebbed and flowed dramatically. The structure and delivery of youth work has taken different forms, through religious

organisations, municipalities and independent NGOs. Political recognition of youth work has taken many forms, sometimes through sufficient and sustainable funding, other times through the attachment of youth work to wider youth policy agendas, the strengthening of the status of youth workers or the professionalization and accreditation of youth work practitioners.

Within this diversity, which in some respects should be celebrated, the quest for common ground may appear to be elusive, yet it is an imperative task if the role of youth work is to be better defined, its distinctive contribution communicated, and its connections with, and place within, wider policy priorities clarified. It was with these tasks that the youth workers, youth policy makers and youth researchers who attended the Convention were challenged.

A strong consensus on the role of youth work did, indeed, remain elusive. However, there was broad agreement concerning the contributions that can be made by youth work both independently and collaboratively.

An overall vision for youth work in Europe

Youth work is about cultivating the imagination, initiative, integration, involvement and aspiration of young people. Its principles are that it is educative, empowering, participative, expressive and inclusive. Through activities, playing and having fun, campaigning, the information exchange, mobility, volunteering, association and conversation, it fosters their understanding of their place within, and critical engagement with their communities and societies. Youth work helps young people to discover their talents, and develop the capacities and capabilities to navigate an ever more complex and challenging social, cultural and political environment. Youth work supports and encourages young people to explore new experiences and opportunities; it also enables them to recognise and manage the many risks they are likely to encounter. In turn, this produces a more integrated and positive attachment to their own identities and futures as well as to their societies, contributing purposefully to wider political and policy concerns around young people not in education, training and employment ('NEET'), health risk lifestyles, lack of civic responsibility and, currently, extremism.

Youth work engages with young people on their terms and on their 'turf', in response to their expressed and identified needs, in their own space or in spaces created for youth work practice. Youth work can also take place in others contexts (such as schools or prisons) but engagement with it needs to remain on a voluntary basis.

Youth work – Distinction and intrinsic challenges

1. Aims and anticipated outcomes

The common ground of youth work is twofold. First, it is concerned with creating *spaces* for young people. Second, it provides *bridges* in their lives.

Both elements are fundamentally aimed at supporting the personal development of young people and strengthening their involvement in decision-making processes at local, regional, national and European levels. They are also focused on fostering 'civic spirit' and shared responsibilities among young people through the use of fun, creative non-formal learning activities.

Beyond creating autonomous spaces for youth work practice, youth work is also concerned with enabling young people to create their own spaces and opening spaces that are missing in other areas – such as schools, training, and labour markets. Similarly, youth work plays a bridging role in supporting young people's social integration, especially young people at risk of social exclusion. Youth work also provides bridging support and advocacy in other contexts in young people's lives.

There is pressure to specify and measure these and other outcomes of youth work. Attention should be given to outcomes and impact where they can be measured, but youth work should continue to focus on the processes and the needs of young people, remaining outcomes informed and not outcomes led. The Convention emphasised that youth work contributes to the development of attitudes and values in young people as much as more tangible skills and competences.

2. Emerging practice

Youth work has always adapted to a range of circumstances and changing trends while remaining true to its core principles. The common ground facing contemporary youth work practice throughout Europe has to embrace at least two current challenges.

First, young people are increasingly engaging with new technologies and digital media. There is clearly a role for online youth work practice, in terms of exploiting a new space for youth work in a meaningful way, supporting digital literacy and enabling young people to deal with some of the associated risks. The practice implications for youth workers lie in new competencies required and new forms of boundary maintenance in relationships with young people.

Secondly, the increasing cultural diversity across Europe means that youth work practice has become more focused on the integration of young people and supporting intercultural learning. Critical practice elements for youth work include enabling young people to explore and build their own identities, attuning communication and information to culture and family contexts, and fostering inclusion while respecting cultural traditions and differences.

3. The quality of youth work practice

Irrespective of who delivers youth work – paid or voluntary – that delivery has to be of high quality. In order to support and sustain the provision of quality youth work, there was agreement that the following measures need to be established.

There needs to be a core framework of quality standards for youth work responsive to national contexts, including competence models for youth workers, and accreditation systems for prior experience and learning. Further, there always needs to

be an appropriate balance between the acquisition of theoretical knowledge and application of practical skills. To this end, training programmes need to demonstrate suitable mechanisms for ensuring the development of reflective practice (praxis).

Training provision should correspond to the realities of youth work at different levels, adopt creative methods such as peer learning and exchanging good practice. It should ensure responsiveness to trends and changing circumstances in young people's lives, such as technology and migration (as discussed above), as well as building capacity amongst youth workers for intercultural communication and language skills.

As youth work engages more with other sectors working with young people, there is an emerging need for cross-sectorial education and training for youth professionals in general.

Youth work – Connections and extrinsic challenges

4. Working together

Youth work does and can address many social issues but seeks to balance this with more individualised questions of personal development and change. There were concerns that too much expectation can be placed on youth work to address societal problems, but this is essentially a question of balance and penetration.

There are inevitably tensions around youth work engaging with the agendas of others. There are always risks of being instrumentalised. However, the Convention agreed that youth work needs to strengthen connections with other sectors working with young people. The starting point is to jointly identify mutual objectives and opportunities for working together. Youth workers should be conscious of their own quality and importance and maintain their value base.

In particular, improved collaboration with formal education confers added value through 'extended' learning: youth work gives diversity and practical experience to formal education, and it also brings into schools the dimension of participation and co-creation. Youth work can also support young people's progress in formal learning, thereby supporting attendance and attainment.

5. Recognition and Value

The Convention agreed that there are three levels of recognition that have, up to now, been insufficiently addressed and require further attention.

First, to gain more recognition youth work needs active promotion and advocacy by all relevant shareholders in politics, public sector and civil society at different levels. Second, there should be greater recognition of NGOs working in the youth work field, including as independent partners in the dialogue shaping youth work development. Third, there needs to be recognition and validation of the learning and achievement that takes place through youth work in non-formal and informal learning environments.

Recommendations and action points –
A European agenda for youth work

Europe needs youth work! Investment in youth work is a necessary contribution to the development of a social Europe. Therefore the 2nd European Youth Work Convention is emphatic about the need for a 'European Agenda for Youth Work', with its main aim to strengthen youth work in Europe.

1. Elements of such a 'European Agenda for Youth Work' should include:

    ▶ A need for more and continuous European co-operation to further develop and strengthen youth work in Europe. This should be fostered through a recommendation of ministers in the Council of Europe and in the European Union.

    ▶ Responsibility for youth work rests at the level of Member States. The Convention sees a need to create a legal basis, national strategies or binding frameworks to safeguard and further develop youth work in the Member States.

    ▶ In most of the Member States youth work is mainly carried out at the local level, which has the final responsibility for youth work. The Convention is asking for more awareness of this local level responsibility and to agree with the local and regional authorities on a European Charter for youth work at local level.

    ▶ As youth work is mainly based on non-formal and informal learning the Convention is requesting the continuation of efforts to implement the existing and future European agendas on the recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

    ▶ To gain more recognition youth work needs active promotion and advocacy by all actors in politics, public sector and civil society on the different levels, European, national, regional, local.

2. Improving the quality of youth work

    ▶ Quality youth work needs discussions about the necessary set of competencies and qualifications for youth workers and the development and implementation of related competence models.

    ▶ Training is a crucial element to support the development of quality youth work. Therefore strategies, concepts and programmes for the training of youth workers based on an agreed set of competences.

    ▶ It is necessary to find ways of recognition of qualifications of youth workers – employed, freelancers or volunteers – through adequate forms of documentation, certification and validation of competencies, which youth workers gained throughout their practice.

    ▶ To help get youth work and youth workers' competencies recognised, national strategies on recognition of youth work and non-formal and informal learning in youth work are required.

    ▶ In some Member States youth work is recognised as a profession. However, pathways for the professionalization of youth work in co-operation with the educational sector are needed.

3. Towards a knowledge-based approach

   ▶ There have been some measures to support knowledge-based youth work in Europe. The Convention supports the different actors to consolidate their efforts to build a knowledge base for youth work in Europe.

   ▶ Youth work needs more national and European research – exploiting different methodologies – about the different forms of youth work, its values, impacts and merits.

   ▶ There is an identified need for support for appropriate forms of scrutiny, inquiry and assessment of youth work practice and concepts in Europe.

   ▶ Based on the evidence of monitoring and research, youth work has a need for mechanisms for the development of reflective practice in Europe.

4. Funding

   ▶ Youth work needs a sufficient and a sustainable system of funding. Within this, existing youth work practices and structures need to be funded as well as innovation and new forms of practice.

   ▶ The European co-operation in youth work needs a strong instrument to financially support European exchange and co-operation. The Erasmus+: Youth in Action programme is the main source of funding these projects and continues to support European NGOs in the youth work field.

   ▶ Funding instruments in youth work need to be accessible for the target groups, therefore access to information and sufficient guidance is needed.

5. Towards common ground

   ▶ The Convention succeeded in taking some important further steps to find common ground for youth work in Europe. However, as youth work and its forms, conditions and practices in Europe remain so diverse, there is a need to continue work on exploring the common ground of youth work and its standards and concepts. These could result in a 'Charter for Youth Work in Europe'.

   ▶ There is a need for mutual development and the exchange of practices in youth work in Europe. Peer learning and peer review exercises on youth work will help to develop practices in and policies on youth work. Co-operation and exchange among youth work actors across Europe requires support for regular platforms for dialogue and sustainable networks and partnerships.

   ▶ Further development of the concepts and practice of youth work are required. Youth work has to find strategies to work on the current and emerging challenges faced by young people in Europe. Youth work has to renew its practice and strategies according to the changes and trends in society and politics. And youth work has to reach out to those target groups which are most affected by the social situation and living conditions of young people.

   ▶ Instruments at a European level are important for the development of youth work practice on other levels. There is a need to support the capacity of youth work to respond to new challenges and opportunities posed by new technologies and digital media.

6. Cross-sectorial co-operation

▶ Youth work has established many links with other sectors, which has built up social practice for and with young people. There is a need for more collaborative practice, to gain more experience and develop models for closer co-operation between different actors from other sectors working with young people.

▶ These links and the existing practice should be mapped, monitored and evaluated in order to exchange the learning from these experiences throughout Europe.

▶ These forms of co-operation need to also be supported by cross-sectorial training.

7. Civic dialogue

▶ Participation is one of the main principles of youth work. The Convention is convinced that the development of youth work can only be taken further when young people get actively involved from the beginning at all levels – European, national, regional and local.

▶ As much as young people themselves, organisations in youth work working with and for young people need to be recognised and involved at all levels as partners in civic dialogue concerned with the development of youth work.

8. The 3rd European Youth Work Convention

▶ The Convention is very grateful to the Belgian Chairmanship for hosting the 2nd European Youth Work Convention. The Convention emphasizes the need for having a regular exchange of concepts, strategies and practice of youth work in Europe and asks Member States, Council of Europe and the European Commission to take the initiative to organise a 3rd European Youth Work Convention.

Concluding remarks

Youth work is not a luxury but an existential necessity if a precarious Europe is to effectively address its concerns about social inclusion, cohesion and equal opportunities, and commitment to values of democracy and human rights. Youth work is a central component of a social Europe.

A failure to invest in youth work has three consequences. It is an abdication of responsibility to the next generation. It is a loss of opportunity to strengthen contemporary civil society throughout Europe. And finally, it weakens the potential for dealing effectively with some of the major social challenges (such as unemployment and extremism) of our time.

Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on youth work

(Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 31 May 2017 at the 1287th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies)

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.b of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its members, *inter alia*, by promoting a youth policy based on common principles;

Having regard to the European Convention on Human Rights (adopted in 1950, ETS No. 5, subsequently amended and supplemented), as applied and interpreted by the European Court of Human Rights, and the European Social Charter (adopted in 1961, ETS No. 35, revised in 1996, ETS No. 163, and subsequently amended and supplemented), as applied and interpreted by the European Committee of Social Rights;

Recalling Resolution CM/Res(2008)23 of the Committee of Ministers on the youth policy of the Council of Europe;

Recalling the applicability of existing principles set out in relevant recommendations of the Committee of Ministers to the member States, in particular:

Recommendation Rec(2003)8 on the promotion and recognition of non-formal education/learning of young people; Recommendation Rec(2004)13 on the participation of young people in local and regional life; Recommendation Rec(2006)1 on the role of national youth councils in youth policy development; Recommendation CM/Rec(2007)13 on gender mainstreaming in education; Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)7 on the Council of Europe Charter on Education for Democratic Citizenship and Human Rights Education; Recommendation CM/Rec(2010)8 on youth information; Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)2 on the participation of children and young people under the age of 18; Recommendation CM/Rec(2012)13 on ensuring quality education; Recommendation CM/Rec(2015)3 on the access of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights; Recommendation CM/Rec(2016)7 on young people's access to rights;

Bearing in mind the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child;

Recalling Parliamentary Assembly Recommendations 1437 (2000) on "Non-formal education"; 1978 (2011) "Towards a European framework convention on youth rights"; 2015 (2013) on "Young people's access to fundamental rights"; and its Resolution 1885 (2012) "The young generation sacrificed: social, economic and political implications of the financial crisis", as well as the replies of the Committee of Ministers to these recommendations;

Recalling the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities' Resolution 386 (2015) "Bringing down barriers to youth participation: adopting a lingua franca for local and regional authorities and young people", and its Recommendation 128 (2003) on "The revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life", as well as the reply of the Committee of Ministers to this recommendation;

Having further regard to the Declaration and Action Plan adopted at the 3rd Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe (Warsaw, 16-17 May 2005) which stated that the Council of Europe would further develop its unique position in the youth field;

Convinced that:

▶ the sustainability of European identity and the Council of Europe's core values (human rights, rule of law and democracy) relies on the creativity, competences, social commitment and contribution of young people and on their confidence in the future as well;

▶ government policies should support young people in realising their full potential as autonomous members of society, enabling them to develop life plans and exercise their democratic citizenship;

▶ youth work makes an important contribution to active citizenship by providing opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes for civic engagement and social action;

Recognising the complexities and challenges of transition from childhood to adulthood and autonomy, as well as the decline in opportunities for young people as a result of increasing unemployment, poverty, discrimination and social exclusion;

Being aware of the impact of the economic crisis on youth work provision in some member States;

Acknowledging the work undertaken by the Council of Europe's youth sector to support youth policies promoting human rights, social inclusion, intercultural dialogue, gender equality and the active participation of young people, in particular through its European Youth Centres, the European Youth Foundation, its intergovernmental co-operation and co-managed statutory bodies and the partnership between the European Union and the Council of Europe in the youth field;

Acknowledging the importance of achieving coherence and synergy with the efforts of all relevant stakeholders, including with the European Union, in the field of youth work;

Acknowledging the positive contribution of youth workers in all member States to empowering and engaging young people in developing inclusive, democratic and peaceful societies;

Drawing on the Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention (2015), entitled "Making a world of difference", which aimed to set a European agenda for youth work,

Recommends that the governments of the member States, within their sphere of competence, renew their support for youth work by:

1. ensuring that the establishment or further development of quality youth work is safeguarded and pro-actively supported within local, regional or national youth policies, as appropriate. Taking into account the diversity of youth work across and within member States, special attention should be paid to the need for strategies, frameworks, legislation, sustainable structures and resources, effective co-ordination with other sectors, as well as to related policies that promote equal access to youth work for all young people. Youth workers and young people should be actively engaged in any planned measures for implementation;

2. establishing a coherent and flexible competency-based framework for the education and training of paid and volunteer youth workers that takes into account existing practice, new trends and arenas, as well as the diversity of youth work. Stakeholders, including youth workers and young people, should be involved in developing this framework;

3. taking into consideration the measures and principles proposed in the appendix to this recommendation and encouraging providers of youth work to do the same;

4. supporting the initiative of the Council of Europe's youth sector to set up an ad hoc high-level taskforce of the relevant stakeholders in youth work in Europe, which can elaborate a mid-term strategy for the knowledge-based development of European youth work, in order to:
    ▶ improve co-ordination of and access to youth work knowledge and resources at European, national, regional and local levels;
    ▶ further support the exchange of youth work practices, peer learning and the creation of sustainable networks and partnerships;
    ▶ stimulate co-operation within the youth sector and among sectors and fields of expertise wherever youth work takes place in order to reinforce ties, in particular between formal education and youth work and between public authorities, the private sector and civil society;
    ▶ strengthen the dialogue between youth work, youth policy and youth research;
    ▶ strengthen the capacity of youth work to respond to the changes and trends in our society and the emerging challenges faced by young people;
    ▶ carry out a mapping exercise on existing education and training (such as vocational training and higher education) and existing systems for validation of competences for paid and volunteer youth workers;
    ▶ develop a range of assistance measures to support member States in taking forward and implementing this recommendation;

5. fostering national and European research on the different forms of youth work and their value, impact and merit;

6. supporting the development of appropriate forms of review and evaluation of the impact and outcomes of youth work and by reinforcing the dissemination, recognition and impact of the Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio in the member States;

7. promoting the Council of Europe Quality Label for Youth Centres as an example of good practice;

It further recommends that the governments of the member States:

▶ ensure that this recommendation, including its appendix, is translated and disseminated (in accessible formats) to relevant authorities and stakeholders, with a view to raising awareness of, and strengthening commitment to, the further development of quality youth work;

▶ examine, within the Committee of Ministers, the implementation of this recommendation five years after adoption.

A. Scope and purpose of the recommendation – definition and scope of youth work

This recommendation applies to youth work in all its diversity. It aims to encourage member States to develop their youth work policy and practice within their sphere of competence and invites member States to adopt a range of measures that will strengthen the necessary support for youth work at local, regional, national and European levels.

The age range of those who benefit from youth work provision should reflect the legal and constitutional framework and existing practices in each of the member States.

Youth work is a broad term covering a wide variety of activities of a social, cultural, educational, environmental and/or political nature by, with and for young people, in groups or individually. Youth work is delivered by paid and volunteer youth workers and is based on non-formal and informal learning processes focused on young people and on voluntary participation. Youth work is quintessentially a social practice, working with young people and the societies in which they live, facilitating young people's active participation and inclusion in their communities and in decision making.

Despite different traditions and definitions, there is a common understanding that the primary function of youth work is to motivate and support young people to find and pursue constructive pathways in life, thus contributing to their personal and social development and to society at large.

Youth work achieves this by empowering and engaging young people in the active creation, preparation, delivery and evaluation of initiatives and activities that reflect their needs, interests, ideas and experiences. Through this process of non-formal and informal learning, young people gain the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes they need in order to move forward with confidence.

In order to facilitate these outcomes, youth work should create an enabling environment that is actively inclusive and socially engaging, creative and safe, fun and serious, playful and planned. It should be characterised by accessibility, openness and flexibility and at the same time promote dialogue between young people and the rest of society. It should focus on young people and create spaces for association and bridges to support transition to adulthood and autonomy.

It is acknowledged that youth work, often in partnership and co-operation with other sectors, produces a wide range of positive outcomes for individuals, their communities and for society in general. For example:

- ▶ it leads to critical reflection, innovation and changes at local, regional, national and European levels;
- ▶ it contributes to young people's well-being, enhancing a sense of belonging and strengthening their capacity to make beneficial choices;
- ▶ it supports positive and purposeful transitions in personal, civic, economic and cultural life, enabling the development of competences that facilitate life-long learning, active citizenship and labour market participation;

▶ it promotes the development of various skills such as creativity, critical thinking, conflict management, digital and information literacy and leadership;

▶ it enhances diversity and contributes to equality, sustainable development, intercultural understanding, social cohesion, civic participation, democratic citizenship and the upholding of the values of human rights;

▶ it strengthens young people's resilience and thereby their capacity to resist negative influences and behaviour.

These positive outcomes, in the face of the current challenges in Europe and the disproportionately negative effects on young people, underline the vital importance of member States ensuring access to quality youth work for all young people. The risks of not doing so could be significant.

Young people are a key resource in building a social and just Europe. Societies are at high risk of undermining stability and social cohesion if they allow the current difficult circumstances to create a "lost generation" of disillusioned and disengaged young people. Adequately supporting young people today, including through the provision of quality youth work, is an important investment Europe has to make for its present and for the future. Not doing so represents a loss of opportunity to strengthen contemporary civil society, a threat to social cohesion and weakens the potential for dealing effectively with some of the major challenges of our time such as migration, unemployment, social exclusion and violent extremism.

B. Principles

The recommendation builds on the existing values, principles and benefits of youth work as enshrined in the instruments referred to in the text above. The design and delivery of youth work are underpinned by the principles of voluntary and active participation, equality of access, openness and flexibility. It should be rights-based, inclusive and centred on young people, their needs and abilities.

As participation is one of the key principles of youth work, young people, youth workers, youth and other organisations providing youth work are recognised as active partners in the development, implementation and evaluation of youth work policy and practice.

Member States are encouraged to secure the active participation of all these stakeholders when taking forward the recommendations and the following measures.

C. Measures

In establishing policies that safeguard and proactively support the establishment and further development of youth work at all levels, member States are invited to:

i. provide an enabling environment and conditions for both proven and innovative youth work practices (including for example, sustainable structures and resources), particularly at the local level, while acknowledging that youth work benefits from regional, national and international opportunities and co operation;

ii. strengthen the role and position of youth work in order to facilitate cross-sectoral co-operation between youth work – whether it is provided by public authorities,

the private sector or civil society – and other sectors, including for example: social care, health, sport, culture, formal education, employment services and criminal justice;

iii. promote and support co-ordination between local, regional, national and European levels of youth work, thereby facilitating networking, co-operation, peer learning and exchange;

iv. promote the recognition of the values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and critical understanding developed through participating in and delivering youth work;

v. promote equal access to youth work;

vi. promote the role of youth work by:
- informing young people of their rights and of the opportunities and services available to them;
- strengthening the active citizenship, participation and social inclusion of all young people, especially those who are at risk and marginalised;
- broadening intercultural competences, European identity and international understanding among young people;
- encouraging young people to advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in their living environment;
- addressing and preventing discrimination, intolerance and social exclusion;
- enhancing non-formal and informal learning;

vii. respect the freedom and autonomy of youth organisations and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs) doing youth work;

viii. foster knowledge-based youth work that can respond to the changes and trends in our societies and the emerging challenges faced by young people;

ix. encourage the use of research, evaluation and continuous follow-up in developing knowledge-based, quality youth work ensuring that mechanisms are in place to measure its outcomes and impact.

In establishing a coherent and flexible competency-based framework for the education and training of paid and volunteer youth workers, member States are invited to:

i. work with youth work providers and other stakeholders to develop a set of core competences (for example values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and critical understanding) that should be expected from youth workers;

ii. establish frameworks, strategies, programmes and pathways for the education, training, capacity building and professional development of youth workers based on the agreed set of competences;

iii. establish new, or further develop existing mechanisms for the documentation, validation, certification and recognition of competences, which paid and volunteer youth workers gain through their practice;

iv. give increased support to implementing the existing and future European frameworks and agendas on the recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

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Tony Taylor's career in English youth work spans five decades. Across this time he has been both a part-time and full-time youth worker, a training and development officer, a community education manager and a chief youth and community officer, all situated within the education departments of the local state. His last paid post was as a senior lecturer in youth work at Manchester Metropolitan University. Presently he works voluntarily for the In Defence of Youth Work forum. He has written extensively, drawing upon his experience as both practitioner and committed trade unionist. Particular areas of research have been anti-sexist work with young men, together with the relation of youth work to class and democracy. In recent years he has focused on the insidious impact of neo-liberalism on the character and purpose of young person-centred, process-led practice, arguing for the renewal of a politicised radical praxis or critical pedagogy as an essential part of a pluralist youth work world.

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If we consider the 50 states having ratified the European Cultural Convention of the Council of Europe or the member states of the European Union, the multiple and divergent nature of the realities, theories, concepts and strategies underlying the expression "youth work" becomes evident. Across Europe, youth work takes place in circumstances presenting enormous differences with regard to opportunities, support, structures, recognition and realities, and how it performs reflects the social, cultural, political and economic context, and the value systems in which it is undertaken.

By analysing theories and concepts of youth work and by providing insight from various perspectives and geographical and professional backgrounds, the authors hope to further contribute to finding common ground for – and thus assure the quality of – youth work in general. Presenting its purified and essential concept is not the objective here. The focus rather is on describing how to "provide opportunities for all young people to shape their own futures", as Peter Lauritzen described the fundamental mission of youth work.

The best way to do this remains an open question. This Youth Knowledge book tries to find some answers and strives to communicate the strengths, capacities and impact of youth work to those within the youth sector and those beyond, to those familiar with its concepts and those new to this field, all the while sharing practices and insights and encouraging further reflection.

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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

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