

Greece

Despite the existence of legal provisions regarding youth issues, there is no special official definition or legal framework for youth work in Greece. However, youth work does exist as a social practice; it constitutes an integral part of educational and welfare work and plays a significant role in supporting young people's safe and healthy transition to adult life. The range of activities described as youth work is extensive, and includes health, social support, counselling, education, training, personal development, and so on. However, it seems that youth work is mainly related to leisure time activity – that is, artistic and cultural programmes, outdoor recreation, sports, etc. – providing a space for youthful experimentation and cultural development. Youth workers in Greece work primarily with young people aged between 15 and 25, but may in some cases extend this to those aged 13-15 or 25-30. Most youth services provide a mixture of 'open' youth work, intended for all young people in the area, and youth work targeting particular groups of young people, usually those who are disadvantaged or socially excluded.

Youth work in Greece involves a complex network of providers, community groups, non-governmental organisations and local authorities supported by a large number of adults working as full-time or part-time paid staff or as unpaid volunteers. However, the main state organisation responsible for the development and implementation of youth work policy in the country is the General Secretariat for Youth. All these different organisations share a more or less common set of youth work values. These include: working with young people because they are young people, and not because they have been labelled or are considered deviant; starting with young people's view of the world; helping young people develop stronger relationships and collective identities; respecting and valuing difference; and promoting the voice of young people.

Youth work is of great social value. It connects with young people's leisure and recreational interests, complements formal educational processes, addresses contemporary social issues such as unemployment, and reflects the particular needs and tasks of young people as they move through the transitions of adolescence and young adulthood. Other types of youth work, both formal and informal, address issues relevant to young people such as drugs, sexual health or discrimination. In many instances, youth workers help young people to gain the skills to develop and lead sessions for other young people, an approach known as peer education. A non-exhaustive list of youth services in Greece includes, for example, career services, youth information, youth associations and participation education for young people with fewer opportunities, cultural education/cultural programmes, and social care services.