

SUMMER 2020

EPLM NEWSLETTER

This newsletter provides updates from practice, research and policy on the topic of learning mobility in the youth field in Europe.



THE EPLM IS...

European Platform for Learning Mobility reflections on coronavirus

The coronavirus pandemic has been a catalyst of change. It has had a significant effect on the learning mobility and our work, but it has not prevented us from thinking of new and innovative ways of learning. The difference between those that are connected and those that are not has been increasing, and for all of us all over Europe there are many challenges. The challenges and apparent inequalities have highlighted even more the importance of our work and the need for learning. This time the newsletter will begin with experiences and reflections of the impact of coronavirus on learning mobility, followed by the updates of partners' work.



The EPLM has a mission to engage in the improvement, knowledge, visibility and recognition of learning mobility in the youth field.

The European Platform for Learning Mobility in the youth field (EPLM) is an open participatory space for exchange and cooperation between practitioners, researchers and policy makers. By 'practitioners' the Platform means programme staff, trainers and consultants, youth workers and other multipliers in the youth field and in youth work.

The EPLM is coordinated by the EU-Council of Europe youth partnership.

[Find out more about EPLM here](#)



Restructuring work

Coronavirus and lockdown measures have forced many organisations to restructure the ways of working. New structures with updated working methods and tools were developed for cooperating with partners, the meetings were moved online, resulting in shorter meeting time, and lower costs. Some aspects of work have been harder – to keep the international programmes running, and those that deliver programmes have had to look into time management, extended project duration up to 6 months, and organisations that were implementing KA2 projects used the budgets to buy IT programmes.

A high number of project applications were received by National Agencies for the recent deadlines, and the National Agencies were very happy to see this optimism which is also a clear signal that mobility programmes and their funding mean a lot to organisations.

Financial aspects



Many organisations, youth clubs, networks, community structures, youth workers, freelancers, trainers and other stakeholders had (extra) financial difficulties due to the coronavirus and lockdown. The sector needs more support from both national and international institutions in order to be able to continue its work. Currently many independent youth organisations have financial problems which might lead to the further shrinking of civil society, because those NGOs which are not supported by the government or local authorities might not survive. Another important financial issue is connected to the existing financing structures and the undergoing changes in the learning mobility. Guidelines for reimbursement are missing if the organisations use virtual mobility as their alternative to continue a project and this is discouraging beneficiaries from implementing virtual mobilities.

The new normal

New measures need to be taken in order to adjust to the ‘new normal’. We believe that we should neither rush “back to normal”, nor exclusively focus on digital or virtual. We need to look at what we should keep and use the momentum to rethink learning mobility, to see how it impacts local communities and to rethink the new initiatives that have been developed.



New ways of working | blended mobility

Learning mobility has been affected by the pandemic significantly. It has been the breakthrough moment for virtual mobility. The technology has been in place for many years, but the pandemic has influenced a greater use of digital tools in our work. It has also brought more emphasis on the topics that were on the EPLM agenda for some time already, such as **sustainability and learning mobility**.

The youth field has received a **boost of creativity** during the pandemic. It has helped some organisations and young people to adjust their use of digital tools not only for fun and entertainment, but also for more meaningful projects and ideas. *When there is no chance for mobility in learning mobility, there still might be interesting learning.* The switch to digital means that more opportunities are online and many organizations are being creative in how to use that for learning purposes. There has been great innovation in how services are provided, and flexibility/adaptability to reach a diversity of people's needs.

Online facilitation has meant many trainers and facilitators had to adapt fast, learn new skills and share practices between them, adapt and rethink their roles as professionals.



Going digital and digital readiness

Digital tools have existed for some time, but the pandemic has caused a huge digital influx – people have been forced to use technology, and have had a crash course to develop their digital skills (whether they wanted to or not).

Online activities have been accepted and recognised by policy makers. Several physical events were translated to be delivered remotely online, and the focus on development of digital tools over the past years has been reinforced.

Going digital also brings challenges. Some organisations and young people do not have access, cannot afford it, or don't have the confidence or skills to work online.

Many questions that we have

- How is the quality of international connection and learning maintained through online projects?
- Can we consider virtual learning a learning mobility?
- How can we achieve the same depth of learning, the same objectives, through virtual mobility?
- Can we keep up the learning outcomes if physical mobility will not be a possibility for a long time?
- How can we best facilitate this type of learning? Do we have enough know-how on how to do digital activities? How skilled are the actors in the youth field to deliver online learning? What competences should be supported/recognised?
- How can we maintain quality of virtual learning mobility? Is there recognition for what is needed for that? Are there enough support and resources for that?
- How to research digital learning mobility in terms of evaluation and impact analysis?
- When we will get back to learning mobilities, what safety measures will be imposed? How to use non-formal methods and keep physical distance?
- What will be the future relationship between virtual and physical mobility?

Returning to the local community: Solidarity

The restrictions on travel have brought people closer together within their immediate environment. Having this 'forced' increase in local initiatives will bring more community focus. Solidarity is being mentioned now more than ever – lockdown has brought the concept in the spotlight again, and this will hopefully help bring more understanding.

Cooperation with municipalities has increased, with activities taking place within communities, and many organisations and institutions have become more active at local level.

If online learning mobility is re-addressed, one option could be to connect it to local initiatives as the first step to learning mobility activities. Linking to the concept of solidarity in our own homes and at a very local level brings European solidarity down to something tangible for communities.

Some countries are being treated differently because of their COVID-19 situation, which might affect participation in international mobilities in the next months and years. This solidarity towards 'your own group' needs to be dealt with carefully. Some local communities could start to close up to international projects. Projects such as workcamps might be under threat if the locals fear an increase in infection through visitors. The concept of 'coronationalism' should be considered, where more people (including young people) are losing faith in international or European solidarity and start to believe the solution is on a national level.

We might have to use a lot of time, energy and resources to bring back the understanding of benefits of learning mobility to 2019 levels.



Inclusion

Digital tools can help in reaching out and including more young people in activities, especially those who are not mobile: the virtual world brings more opportunities for social inclusion.

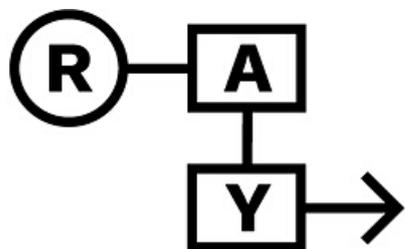
On the other hand, going digital excludes those who do not have or cannot afford technology, which adds to learning mobility being a "minority matter". New forms of exclusion and barriers might arise – for example those that need visas will most probably be asked for health reports to be able to travel, adding time and financial cost to their involvement, and making their participation in learning mobility activities even more difficult.

Many people might choose NOT to travel. It will be important to consider mental blocks and not to undermine representation. Cancelled projects will have an impact on many young people's futures – not only their personal paths – but in developing their competences, their openness, their solidarity.

How will the sharing of European values, European identity, understanding people from other cultures be encouraged if young people can't travel? How can (international) youth work help in closing these social divides? What tools, experience and strengths does the youth field have to close the divides?

Researching the impact of COVID-19

EU-Council of Europe youth partnership hosted three reflection meetings with various stakeholders (researchers, policy makers, youth organisations) on the impact of COVID-19 on the youth sector and surveys conducted so far on the impact. Potential next steps in this context are being examined.



RAY research

RAY Network is conducting a research on the impact of the corona pandemic on youth work in Europe. The survey is closed already and the results will be processed in July.

Research-based analysis of European youth programmes

In distance but not apart

A case analysis presenting the measures that were taken to manage the COVID-19 crisis in youth field in Estonia.

[Press here to read all about it.](#)



Independent research on COVID-19 and its impact

An independent research, conducted by Stefan Georgiev, focused on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on the international youth work field. It attempts to fill the gap of relevant primary data covering recent pandemic measures and their impacts.

[Read the summary of the findings here.](#)



Eurodesk COVID-19 impact study

Eurodesk just finished collecting the results of a network wide survey on the impact of COVID-19 on their youth information services. The survey was run in May so the responses are quite recent.

There were 132 respondents from 25 countries.

[You can find the article presenting the study here.](#)



71,6% of the participants of the study claimed that they offered new activities to young people as a result of adapting their services to online spaces. 27,9% saw a decrease in their salaries, 15,3% estimated the risk of losing their jobs in the next three months as very likely; and 41,4% had a decrease in their motivation as a result of COVID-19. Areas that they identified that most young people worry about relate to education (60,6%) and employment (59,6%).



Good practices

During the Pandemic ERYICA has been gathering good practices and resources from its members, here is a selection published on the website of the Council of Europe.



#giveavoice

The SALTO network has organised a mini solidarity campaign online which ended about two weeks ago called #giveavoice.

"We are going through challenging times. The current situation has a particular significance in our area of work that counts on international mobility. Despite the current limitations of mobility within #Erasmusplus and #EUSolidarityCorps, the values and principles behind the programmes continue to be relevant. As a part of this community, the Network of SALTO Resource Centres is interested in checking in on what is happening in the field, to learn from and support each other. We invite you to connect with us through our social media channels, by commenting and responding to our questions and share your experience."

#YouthWork
#CheckingIn

#InTimesofCorona



NFL Goes Online

Informal talks with trainers, NA staff members, youth workers are held on Thursdays in Zoom. The initiative is hosted by Mark Taylor and Sérgio Gonçalves.

The first season had 7 sessions and the report is here.



A Facebook group was created which has more than 400 members already. This is the place where the organisers post the Zoom links for anybody to join the weekly session:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/nflgoesonline/>

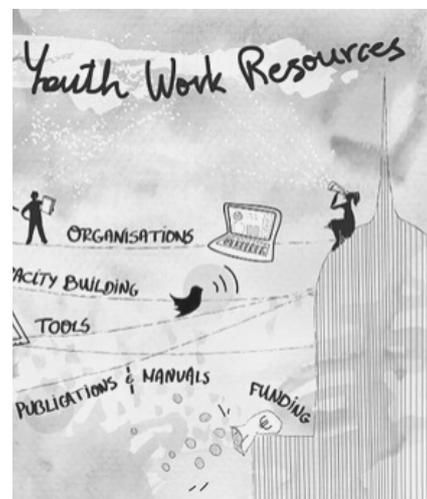
Informal Colleagues Support Online Meetings

European Solidarity Corps Resource Centre organised a series of online meetings with NA staff to create the opportunity to network and stay connected during the pandemic. There were online meetings that focused on different topics, such as: TEC online, Job & Traineeships, Quality Label, etc.

Smart and digital youth work resources: where to find more

Nerijus Kriauciunas has put together an impressive set of resources for smart and digital youth work including: publications, training materials, good practices, policy frameworks, digital resources, relevant organisations, handbooks, videos, webinars and podcasts on digital youth work.

[Find full article here.](#)



Virtual Exchanges and other online-based work methods

The organisations need "faith" & capacity-building in the international cooperation online. We can already see raising interest in the Virtual Exchanges.

Erasmus+ Virtual Exchange is a ground-breaking project enabling youth in Europe and the Southern Mediterranean to engage in meaningful intercultural experiences online, as part of their formal or non-formal education.



How will youth work look like after COVID-19?

Podcast by Humak University "Talking Youth Work" presents a conversation with Laimonas Ragauskas, an international trainer and consultant in the field of Education. In this episode existing platforms and future scenarios are explored, the "what if's", the "maybe's" and the possible constraints. Let there be hope and innovative solutions.

[Listen here.](#)

PODCAST
TALKING YOUTH WORK

**Youth Work
after COVID-19**
with Laimonas Ragauskas

Open petition "Responding to the Impact of COVID-19 on International Youth Work Mobility"

International Youth work Trainers Guild held a series of consultative meetings with trainers active on the international level to gather their experiences of being affected by COVID-19 induced lock-down, as well as to formulate responses to this situation. The result is an **online petition**, which calls for continued support for international youth work training, as well as recognition of online learning as a valid form of youth work training, while not as a replacement of residential, face-to-face work.

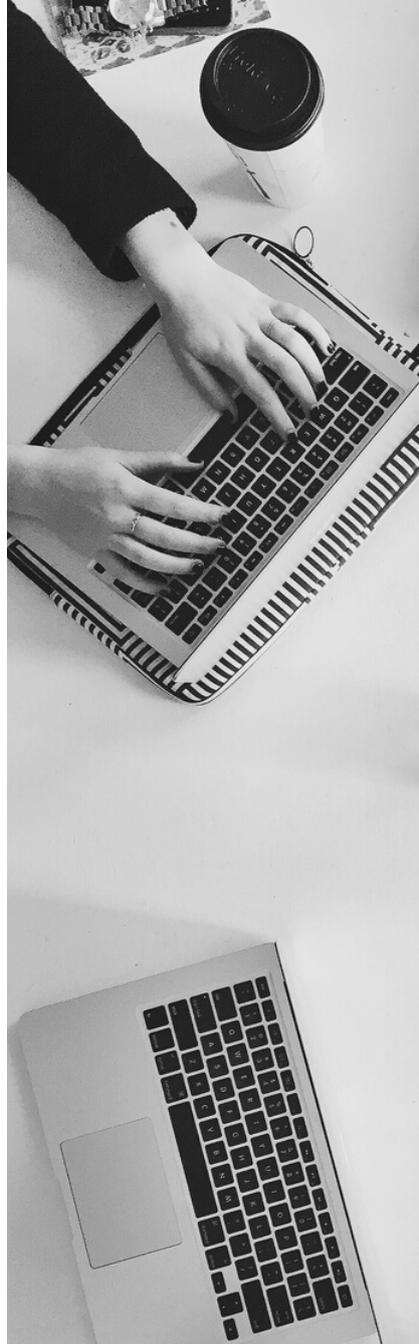


IYWT Guild - Stories from making online training a reality

International Youth Work Trainers Guild started gathering stories, experiences and insights from the past 3 months from international youth work trainers running their activities online. The stories feature quite extensive learning insights from those experiences, supporting quality of further implementation.

Part 1

Part 2



Conference "Exploring the digital dimension of youth workers' competences"

The conference "Exploring the digital dimension of youth workers' competences" took place in Vienna on 24-26 February 2020, organised by IZ - Vielfalt, Dialog, Bildung, Poywe, aufZAQ Zertifizierte AusbildungsQualität and SALTO Training & Cooperation. Over two and a half days, the participants had an opportunity to exchange on the topic, explore competence models (ETS) and framework (aufZAQ), listen to good practices and projects, and put our brains together to define the possible next steps. Should you wish to read and see more about the conference, have a look at the [Logbook of POYWE on the conference](#) and the [videos](#).



Routes4Youth - European Youth Card and youth mobility exploring the Cultural Routes

The European Youth Card Special Edition on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe is free for young people in Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia. It offers access to 18 cultural routes across these countries and invites young people to explore different themes.

[More on this initiative here](#)



European
Youth Card

Routes4U Project

Funded
by the European Union
and the Council of Europe



Implemented
by the Council of Europe

Study on Social Inclusion, Digitalisation and Young People



The study presents a collection of European and national policies, existing digital platforms, online tools and educational and training opportunities available to young people and youth workers or teachers, and a selection of risks and opportunities associated with social inclusion of young people within the digital realm.

Youth inclusion, digital solutions and the global pandemic

The topic of digitalisation has been one of the key priorities for the European institutions over the last years, as well as the topic of great significance for the youth field, including policy makers, youth researchers and youth practitioners. The effects of COVID-19 pandemic on the youth sector have highlighted the need to look at the existing practices that link digitalisation to the different aspects that are relevant to and for young people.

[Press here to read the full article.](#)

EYE Online - social inclusion and digitalisation

A presentation of digital platforms for social inclusion of young people during COVID-19, at EYE Online.



Inclusion and how to host online youth work

"Digital inclusion starts from very little steps, like adding alternative descriptions for images when creating your online content, or sharing slides and texts in advance when hosting activities, to allow participants' specific inclusion tools, as voice readers, to be tested and adjusted to your content – and of course, inclusion can get great support from specific hardware devices."



Inclusion and Diversity Forum



THE Inclusion & Diversity event of the year! Time to celebrate, inspire and look forward.
16-19 November 2020 in Ostend, Belgium.

Together we will create greater visibility for inclusion & diversity and build bridges between stakeholders active in the field. **Find out more!**

The DesYIgn Focus Group report studies young people's information-seeking behaviour, and was carried out in the framework of the Innovative Youth Information Service Design and Outreach (DesYIgn) Erasmus+ project. The knowledge extracted from the study can be used in improving the service design and communication activities of youth information and counselling services, ensuring they are user-centred and innovative.

Eight focus group interviews were carried out in four different countries, which were: UK (Wales), Spain (Valencia and Madrid), Malta, and Luxembourg. A total of 37 young people, aged between 15 and 29 and with an average age of 19; participated in the in-depth discussion, where they elaborated on their everyday information-seeking practices, their level of awareness of the services, their challenges in accessing the services, and how they would prefer using such information services.

[The report is available in English, Italian, and will shortly be available in Spanish as well.](#)

Desk Research on Tools and Resources for community impact

The key idea behind this desk analysis is to map and analyse the existing material, resources and tools within the following five pillars:

1. Civic Engagement;
2. Quality and Competences;
3. Social Impact;
4. Youth Policy.



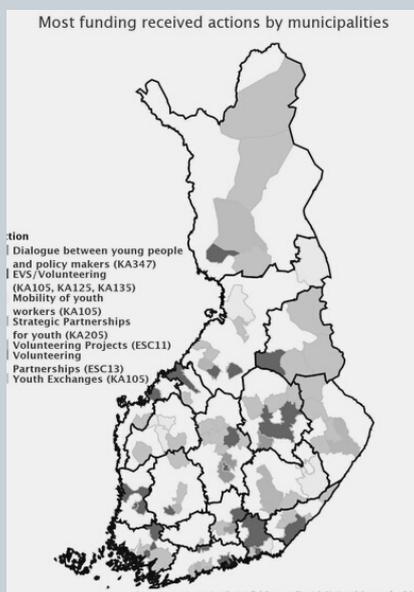
Desk Research on indicators of social impact

This desk research encompasses a mapping of the existing research, literature, best practices, inspirations, programs, initiatives and mobility projects to assess how they evaluate/approach the assessment of social impact. The key purpose of this exercise is to:

1. identify gaps that make evident the need and importance of developing indicators of social impact at the individual, organisational and community levels;
2. to offer suggestions of potential indicators to be developed.



Statistics on international youth in Finland



International youth work has now its own section on the Finnish youth work statistics portal Nuorisotilastot.fi.

These visualized statistics will help you understand how EU funding for international youth work is distributed in Finland. The statistics are based on data from the projects funded by the Erasmus + Youth in Action and European Solidarity Corps funded by the Finnish National Agency.

The aim of the statistics is to support decision-making, youth work as well as research. The website exists in Finnish, Swedish and English.

Find inspiration how to analyse what is happening in your countries by pressing here.

YOCOMO Online - SALTO Training and Cooperation

The first YOCOMO Online course on a competence-based approach, has been launched on the 26th of March. It explored the notion of competence, what is a competence-based approach, the European Training Strategy and tools for self-assessment.

The first five weeks have been facilitated and the course is now open for self exploration and self-directed learning.

A new package of facilitated weeks will start again end of June 2020 /early July, with some adjustments made abided on the evaluation received. More than 800 youth workers enrolled in the course.

Link to enroll.

Save the date for the 2nd ETS Conference!

The German National Agency and SALTO Training & Cooperation Resource Centre will implement the 2nd edition of the ETS conference on **29-31 March 2021 in Berlin.**

The focus will be on education & training of youth workers, with a particular attention on the training and competence development, and on the launch of the new European Training Strategy (ETS).

Q! tools

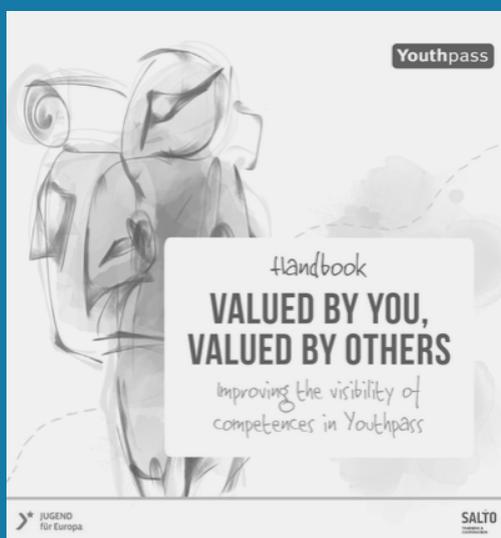
In 2020 the Q tools have been further developed and promoted. A **video presentation, tutorials, leaflet and Facebook page** were produced to promote the Q App.



Quality wave

Three webinars for Q! ambassadors were organised in the period from 5th to 25th of May with 39 people attending. They looked at the past, present and future of Quality in Learning mobility and how to promote it.

Two Quality activities are postponed - training in Belgium in Spring 2021 and seminar in France in Autumn 2021.



Handbook "Valued by You, Valued by Others" by SALTO Training & Cooperation RC

Youthpass is a process that enhances self-awareness, confidence and the learning to learn competence. It can also be helpful when presenting the acquired competences to others.

This handbook focuses on two contexts in which Youthpass holders may want to present their competences – one, when they are applying for jobs and two, in the context of formal education and validation. A large section of the handbook is dedicated to reflection.

You can download the online handbook [here](#) or contact the Youthpass team to receive a printed copy.



Call for papers "Europe talks Solidarity"



In order to further explore and deepen the understanding of solidarity in Europe and beyond, the Solidarity Corps Resource Centre invites researchers, practitioners, young people, policy makers to share their view on and in-depth analysis of the connection of solidarity with:

- International youth work;
- Participation;
- Inclusion;
- Solidarity in the European Solidarity Corps;
- Human Rights;
- Sustainable Solidarity.

Romina.Matei@iz.or.at



Greening Youth Information Services

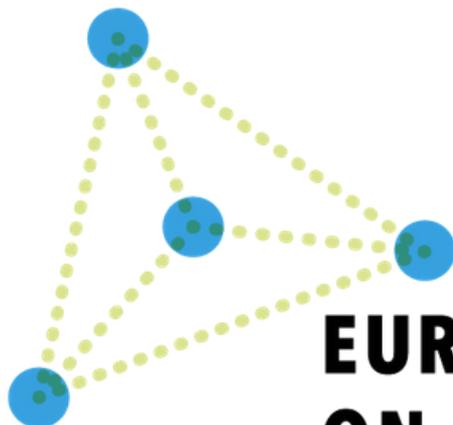
This recently published guide has been developed by Eurodesk and ERYICA. The aim of the guide is to explore the role of youth information work in the context of the climate emergency, as well as to provide concrete tips and examples of good practices when it comes to designing and providing greener youth information services. The guide provides examples of how to inform, engage and empower young people on environmental sustainability. The objective is also to raise awareness about the importance of greener youth information strategies and youth programmes among service providers and policy makers. The publication is complemented with policy recommendations on greener youth programmes, examples of non-formal education activities and a green glossary.

[You can access the publication here](#)



Save the date for the EPLM Conference on Sustainability

The EPLM Conferences bring together researchers, practitioners, volunteers, policy makers, institutions and organisations in the youth field working on the topic of learning mobility. The next conference will be held in **Autumn 2021** focusing on **Learning Mobility and Sustainability**, hosted by the Finnish National Agency for Erasmus+.



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**EUROPEAN PLATFORM
ON LEARNING MOBILITY**
in the youth field