Youth Partnership

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A Framework for Youth Work with Refugees: Analysis further to the expert seminar "Journeys to a New Life: Understanding the role of youth work in integrating young refugees in Europe"

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Introduction

Precise definitions of youth work, its contexts, influential factors and objectives are almost impossible. This is mainly because the contexts within which youth work takes place are incredibly varied, and activities undertaken by youth workers are often shared by many other professionals (Sercombe 2010). Moreover, youth work is constantly required to adapt to the variety of new emerging social problems and such expectation is likely to generate vagueness in its conceptualisation (Morciano and Scardigno 2014). The sudden arrival and uncertain status in Europe of a large number of adolescent migrants, often unaccompanied, is one such situation. As a working concept, youth work is often broadly understood as interventions directed towards the voluntary participation of young people, supporting them towards their personal and social development through non-formal and informal learning (European Commission 2015).

Youth work activities are usually of a social, cultural, educational and/or political nature focused both on individuals and groups organised by, with and for young people, aimed mostly at the cultivation of associative life and the promotion of self-government experiences (Council of Europe-European Union 2016). There is also a common agreement that youth work has a diverse range of fields, goals and methods of intervention (Morciano and Scardigno 2014). In general, youth work is considered to be educative, empowering, participative, expressive and inclusive in cultivating the imagination, initiative, integration, involvement and aspiration of young people (Council of Europe-European Union 2016).

Is it therefore safe to assume that youth work has a role to play in the integration of young refugees? In her paper, Bello (2016) presents a comprehensive situational analysis of the "refugee crisis" in relation

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to some youth work in Europe. Over the last five years, more than a million young people from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iraq, Somalia, Syria and elsewhere left their homelands, mainly because of violent conflicts and chronic poverty, to seek asylum in certain European countries. For instance, more than 35,000 unaccompanied minors arrived in Sweden during 2015 (Swedish Migration Board 2016). This represents about 40% of all unaccompanied young migrants in Europe during 2015 (ibid.). Indeed, the recent flow through and into Europe of young refugees, young people applying for asylum and other young migrants calls for extra attention, resources and planning for youth work in transit and receiving countries.

Given the size of the challenge to governments, inter-governmental bodies, communities and of course to young refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and their families, it will require great efforts, resources and willingness on the part of the youth sector to play a role in integration.

Legal and policy matters

It is clear that most young refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and their families face multiple "internal and external" challenges, namely from the refugee experience itself, in their personal growth and development, and concerning integration and settlement in their new environment (Victorian Settlement Planning Committee 2005). There are nonetheless fundamental support structures and systems that govern the responses that receiving countries and the youth sector within them and regionally can make given these challenges.

Given that youth work is based on the principles of inclusiveness and participation, efforts and effective strategies are needed for the social integration of young refugees in and by means of youth activities. The same can be said of young people applying for asylum and other young migrants. The United Nations (1995) broadly defines social integration as a process in fostering societies that are stable, safe and just and that are based on the promotion and protection of all human rights, as well as on non-discrimination, tolerance, respect for diversity, equality of opportunity, solidarity, security and participation of all people. Social integration is particularly seen as a two-way process where the support providers and the support receivers have to interact and participate in designing the process and activities. Another definition is useful: refugees are persons fleeing armed conflict or persecution and are defined and protected in international law (UNHCR 1951, 1967). In its online information, UNHCR reminds us that an asylum-seeker is someone whose request for sanctuary has yet to be processed. IOM defines a migrant as "any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from their habitual place of residence, regardless of (1) the person's legal status; (2) whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3) what the causes for the movement are; or (4) what the length of the stay is" (IOM 2011).

The current paper stresses that youth work with refugees, and by extension with young people applying for asylum and other young migrants in Europe, must embrace a holistic approach to integration, with emphasis on actions and activities that favour the personal and social development of young people – not just their legal status, rights to protection and resources, or their economic potential through access to the labour market. The political as well as structural barriers to integration require policy development and legal clarity. Advocacy by the youth sector to achieve such social progress is possible. And all the more necessary.

Conceptualising of youth work in Europe with young refugees from the Middle East, its delivery and evaluation should draw on national youth policy and international standards, as seen through the lens of youth policy in the originating countries and regions (Thomson and Badre 2016).

Some specific approaches to support integration will be required when dealing with youth in trauma, those affected by trafficking, sexual abuse and other forms of exploitation. The paper takes the view that such approaches should be put in place by authorities and civil society, guided by the principles of international norms and standards of protection afforded international law. At the same time, it takes an eco-social work approach to youth work and proposes that such a holistic approach is particularly appropriate to shape and design responses intended to be delivered in the non-formal, youth-centred setting with refugees. Such youth work responses including conflict management and skills for life deliverable in non-formal educational settings, and income-generation may be more useful if designed to strengthen clinical and social services provided for adolescent unaccompanied minors. Carefully developed in receiving countries, they may lead to strengthening and integration of case management practice all along the migrant route.

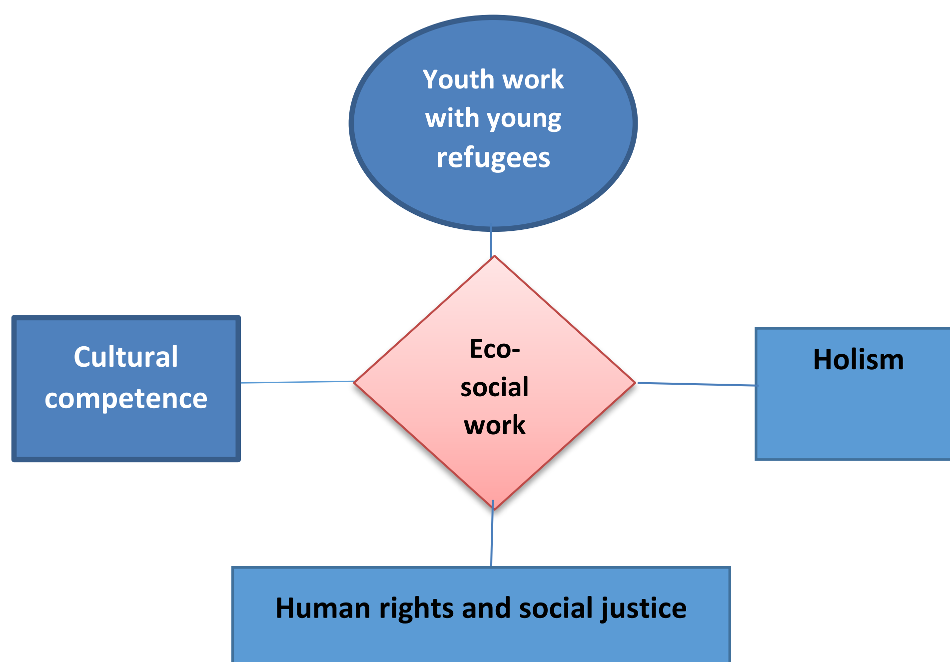
A framework for youth work interventions

Quality youth work is based on sound theories and trusted methods. A theory provides knowledge and explanation on what is happening/going to happen and why, while a method helps in designing a model of intervention and practice. Eco-social work can be considered as both a theory and a method for youth work. Eco-social work originates from the application of systems theoretical thinking in practice. A system is usually defined as a collection of units that interact with each other to form a collective whole. Within youth work, the notion of systems can be understood as collections of interrelated individuals, families, political agents, schools, youth clubs, faith communities, parks, playgrounds and so on that form a web of interactions to contribute to the make-up of society as a whole. An eco-social work model has a holistic view by considering people and their social environment as well as the bio-physical environment in processes of mutual reciprocity and complementary exchanges of resources (Matthies, Turunen, Albers, Boeck and Närhi 2000). A critical perspective of the eco-social reiterates the argument that bio-physical environmental problems are connected to social problems, social inequality, and social changes at the global and local levels (Matthies et al. 2000; Rambaree 2013).

An eco-social work theoretical perspective recognises that human health and wellbeing (including social sustainability) is to a large extent dependent on the bio-physical environment. Essentially, an eco-social orientation is based on the argument that both the ecological and the social are inextricably related and cannot be considered in isolation from one another (Rambaree and Ahmadi in press). Eco-social work therefore not only focuses on the social environment of human beings but also on the natural, bio-physical environment as a means for enhancing human well-being. In particular, this approach makes maximum use of natural resources and supports available within the human natural, bio-physical environment to enhance human wellbeing and functioning.

For eco-social work to be a useful framework for youth work interventions, including with refugees, it needs to be based on the following core values, among others: holism, cultural competence and human rights and social justice (depicted in Figure 1).

Figure 1: An eco-social work framework for youth work with refugees



Holism

A holistic approach (with social, economic, civic, political, cultural and ecological dimensions) to youth work is highly recommended by the European Commission (European Commission 2015). A holistic approach recognises that youth development is influenced by the social, economic, political and environmental realities surrounding young people (Fletcher 2014). Given the complexities surrounding human societies, holistic youth work needs to strive for the broadest possible understanding of the young refugees' situation and then direct multi-dimensional efforts towards responding to their needs (Hutchinson and Oltedal 2003). Youth work promoting the health and wellbeing of the refugees therefore needs holistic initiatives and responses and demands multi-disciplinary teamwork.

For instance, when facilitating the adaptation of refugees to their new environment in the receiving country, a holistic approach to youth work would focus on both the socio-economic and the bio-physical environments. Current discourse lacks focus on facilitating adaptation of young refugees in their new bio-physical environment and may have little appreciation for the prior environment. Adaptation to the new bio-physical environment is much more than just getting used to the climate and the geography. Refugees may indeed be considered as being "uprooted and transplanted" with a broken tie to their own natural bio-physical environment (Hammond 2004). Their holistic development can be supported through use of the ecological resources available in their new bio-physical environment. In this sense, Ungar (2011: 1) posits that "greater emphasis needs to be placed on the role social and physical ecologies play in positive developmental outcomes when individuals encounter significant amounts of stress". For instance, youth work with refugees could consider an "EcoWellness" model that provides a basis for integrating nature into the counselling process to enhance holistic wellness (Reese and Myers 2012).

Cultural competence

The Council of Europe-European Union (2016) makes the following declaration in the European Youth Work Convention 2015:

> 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". (pp. 5-6)

Further, sound knowledge about any specific group or population, refugees included, is a necessary prerequisite for culturally competent youth work at every level from individuals, to groups, organisations, communities, state and national and international policies and programmes (Rothman 2008). In this sense, the Council of Europe (2011) states:

> cultural …competences encompass an ability to acquire, use and make changes in culture and … are therefore of vital importance in order for diverse cultures in Europe to flourish, and for their richness to be preserved and protected. (p. 2)

Cultural competence in youth work today certainly includes understanding of refugees from a socio-cultural perspective. Although culture can be seen as a container concept, it is commonly understood as a system of interrelated beliefs, values and practices that influence and condition perception, judgment, communication and behaviour (Airhihenbuwa 1995). In particular, cultural competence moves beyond concepts of "cultural awareness" – knowledge about a particular group primarily gained through reading or studies; and "cultural sensitivity" – knowledge as well as some level of experience with a group other than one's own (Advocates for Youth 1994). It is defined as "the ability of individuals and systems to work or respond effectively across cultures in a way that acknowledges and respects the culture of the person or organization being served" (Williams 2001:1).

Among others, cultural competence in youth work needs an awareness of diversity among human beings, an ability to support and care for individuals and groups having different cultural background and orientation, non-judgmental openness in interactions, and most importantly recognise the enhancement of cultural competence as a long-term continuous process (Jirwe, Gerrish and Emami 2006). Cultural competence is enhanced by adopting a reflective practice in youth work. Reflective practice, which is broadly defined as making reflection in, on, and about youth work situation(s) and intervention(s), is crucial in the process of enhancing quality of work through critical thinking and reasoning. Reflective practice is in fact evaluation in action and evaluative reflections reproduce the insights required, *inter alia*, in the cycle of project management. In fact, the youth sector, like social work, has a tradition of learning from many evaluation processes other than reflective learning. Nonetheless, promoting reflective practice for enhancing cultural competence in youth work will strengthen the knowledge base, improve practice and broaden the voices that inform policy (Herman 2012). In relation to this, Emslie (2009: 417) opines that "given the fundamental role of reflective practice in youth work, it is surprising the development of youth workers' ability to critically reflect has received so little formal attention". Were it to, management competences would improve along with cultural competences.

Human rights and social justice

Human rights and social justice often go hand in hand; for instance, Wronka (2017) considers human rights as the bedrock for social justice. Individually and in interaction, they are fundamental to youth work with refugees. Human rights frameworks ensure that all people, including young refugees, have

the opportunity to fully participate in economic, social and cultural life and to enjoy an adequate standard of living and well-being (European Youth Forum 2016). Under the influences of globalisation and migration, a most pressing challenge for youth work in European countries is to find means for addressing racial, ethnic, gender, sexual, religious and other diversities utilising a human rights and social justice perspective. In this sense, McDaniel (n.d.) believes:

> The field of youth work needs to shift its focus away from prevention/intervention and positive youth development models to one that examines the complex social, economic and political forces that affect the lives of young people and adults. Social and economic patterns of racism, sexism, classism and homophobia are some of the main problems confronting youth today. (p. 41)

In particular, the concept of social justice allows for a broader understanding of freedom from oppression, exploitation, marginalisation, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence of vulnerable groups such as refugees. As a concept, however, social justice is valueless unless youth work has clear practical orientations towards its use for achieving emancipation and liberation of the marginalised and vulnerable individuals and groups from injustices and oppressive agencies, forces as well as structures (Morgaine 2014). The history of youth work in Europe is in fact the genealogy of young people, youth leaders, youth advocates and youth workers engaged politically in issues such as human rights and social justice – for example, getting involved in campaigns for peace, for ending poverty and resolving conflicts in their communities and so on (Lemos and Crane 2006). Within the context of youth work with refugees, there is therefore clearly an incentive to practise human rights based participatory approaches, in which the young refugees together with their peers from the host country can act as contributors to youth programmes.

Eco-social youth work perspectives and practices

As the number of young refugees across Europe increases, youth organisations are likely to find themselves increasingly called to action to address their challenges and realities. An eco-social work perspective and a repertoire of practices carried out in the bio-physical environment will be well suited to connect to young refugees, solve the social problems potentially arising from their meeting with (often reluctant) receiving populations, and navigating both groups through the social changes arising at the local level that have their origin in political and economic issues at global level. Let us look at some of these challenges and realities.

Trauma

Among newly arrived refugees, individual profiles and life stories of young people vary, while opportunities and key encounters are not the same for everyone (UNHCR and Council of Europe 2014). Indeed, personal strength and past trauma differ from one person to another. However, recent studies confirm that most young refugees have more mental health problems, and are highly at risk of developing mental illnesses than their non-refugee counterparts (Hollander et al. 2016). Unaccompanied minors during their journey may suffer traumatic events that affect both physical and mental health. Many of them have been exposed to chronically stressful family environments and further complex trauma. Such experiences affect young people’s biological and cognitive development, their ability to self-regulate emotions, behaviours and impulses and their self-esteem and confidence (Cook et al. 2005).

In fact, the existence of mental illness in unaccompanied children is the rule rather than the exception. For instance, a Norwegian study with 160 unaccompanied minors showed that 82% had experience of traumatic events and that 41.9% met post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) criteria (Jakobsen, Dermott and Heir 2014). In Switzerland, 14% of patients from a refugee background presenting in a hospital emergency room have psychiatric conditions, while mental health issues (depression, psychoses) affect one third of refugees from the Middle East (compared with 4% of migrant Africans). Previous studies confirmed that unaccompanied young people show a high frequency of psychiatric symptoms upon arrival into the receiving country (Hessle 2009). It is also known that adverse childhood experience (ACE) is strongly associated with adulthood-associated high-risk health behaviours such as smoking, alcohol and other drug abuse, promiscuity, severe obesity, and correlated with ill-health including depression, heart disease, cancer, chronic lung disease and shortened lifespan (Felitti et al.1998; Murphy et al. 2015; Steele et al. 2016).

Many young people tell of beatings, abuse, rape and torture, to having witnessed violent events of the same nature (UNICEF 2016). Some young people suppress their emotions following traumatic experiences (Nickerson et al. 2016) and studies by Groan Bodegård describe how in the most severe cases young people develop different disabling symptoms that go under the term “Pervasive Refusal Syndrome”, which briefly means refusal to communicate (Bodegård 2005). These symptoms are derived from severe trauma, lack of meaningful activity and poor belief in the future.

According to the studies, research and experience mentioned above it is easy to understand what a great challenge it is for a community to receive and be responsible for a large group of young people with potential complex trauma experience. For instance, in 2016 Sweden received the equivalent of a third of its own youth population as unaccompanied minors aged 15-18 years (Swedish Migration Board 2016). Models to support institutions taking care of young refugees and methodologies to heal the suffering of those traumatised are needed, as are approaches to youth work based on existing trauma research integrating eco-social work. A possible youth work intervention can be based on “The Three Pillars” framework that builds on the understanding that much of the healing from exposure to chronic stress and trauma can and does take place in non-clinical settings (Bath 2015). The Three Pillars framework is based on safety and feeling safe, connections to enhance good relations in life, and functional coping strategies (ibid.). In fact, healing relationships need not always involve psychotherapy, as many people recover from trauma exposure without seeking professional assistance, by processing and resolving their injuries in the context of family, friendship and other relationships (Briere and Lanktree, 2012).

Equine-assisted reflective activities have developed as horses are believed to have certain distinct emotional and caring characteristics that make them suitable for human health promotion (Håkanson et al. 2009). In particular, it is argued that horses have an ability to provide social support which acts as a stress buffer that generates long-lasting benefits for people. Such practice is essential in supporting people with mental health vulnerabilities. Equine characteristics alone do not foster gains for clients; and therefore service providers need to be supported so that they can help their clients to engage in reflective activities for enhancing health and well-being. A 10-step equine-assisted reflective activity adopted in Canada with Syrian refugee children with trauma (Hungar 2015) is being reproduced as a project-based action research with young refugees in Gavle, Sweden.[2] The eco-social principles and bio-physical methods of such equine-assisted therapy are related principally to their being practised in

2. www.slatternegard.se.

a natural context, are rhythmic and based on confidence in a relationship (which, as it is inter-species, is free of inter-personal prejudices).

Sexual and reproductive health and rights

As they transit from childhood to adulthood, adolescents (defined as persons aged 10 to 19 years) normally experience puberty and sexual development alongside neuro-psychological processes closely associated with risk-taking. At the same time, the influence of adult role models and structured community groups (cultural, peers, religious bodies) generally establishes or reinforces social norms, both positive and negative, with consequences for identity construction, well-being and health including sexual health. Recall that the World Health Organisation (WHO 2010) defines sexual health as:

> a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. For sexual health to be attained and maintained, the sexual rights of all persons must be respected, protected and fulfilled. (p. 3)

Recent studies have highlighted the unmet sexual and reproductive health and rights of young refugees (Sudbury and Robinson 2016). However, little attention has been given in sexual health and rights discourses to the sexuality of young refugees within a normative relationship pathway that include experimentation, dating, romantic and/or sexual partnerships. Within youth work it is vital to acknowledge young refugees as sexual beings and as having the same basic human rights as “non-refugee” youth. Many young refugees do not get organised support to learn about sexuality and sexual relationships including through comprehensive sexuality education. As a growing adult, young refugees need to establish dating, romantic or sexual relationships which form parts of basic human relationships and fulfil their basic human needs to have age-appropriate sexual interactions/activities. Ignoring a person’s sexual rights can have severe consequences on any human beings. Recent sexual violence in Germany and Sweden, which gained so much media attention and resulted in rising hostility toward refugees, is perhaps a consequence of neglecting basic life skills support as a vehicle for addressing the sexual health of young refugees (Davis and Vidler 2016).

During such humanitarian emergencies as Europe is currently facing, family and social structures of adolescents are largely disrupted, while formal and informal education is discontinued. Despite the human capacity for resilience, community and social networks break down in times of large-scale population movement. Vulnerable groups including children (defined as under-18 years of age) and adolescents face the additional risks of being subjected to sexual and gender-based violence when fleeing armed conflict and seeking protection and asylum. Family members are often dispersed during flight, leaving children isolated from the rest of their families as unaccompanied minors.

Unmet needs remain significant, due to acute accommodation and shelter weaknesses and unfamiliarity on the part of humanitarian actors concerning the specific aspects of adolescent health and development. The loss of livelihood, security and the protection provided by family and community places adolescents at many risks. A number of adolescents, both boys and girls, including younger ones, experience sexual attack, coercion, extortion by persons in authority (UNICEF 2016). Sexual abuse of separated children in foster care, domestic violence, sexual assault when in transit facilities or while collecting food, water, fuel and other resources is reported. Recourse to sex for survival, forced prostitution, sexual exploitation in the country of asylum or in transit, with or without

the complicity of family is undertaken often in expectation of access to assistance and resources. Resumption of harmful traditional practices affecting the health of children and adolescents is also regrettably noticed in situations of displacement (Norwegian Refugee Council 2015).

Young refugees, though often resilient, need the support of life skills delivered through non-formal educational methods. The lack of access to education and information, the disruption or inaccessibility of health services and commodities, and the increased risk of sexual exploitation and abuse as well as high-risk sexual behaviour during emergencies, all put adolescents at risk. Risks include unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortion, STIs and HIV infection and resorting to selling sex to meet their own or their families' needs. Essential protection services are still lacking, and while those that exist, such as the UN Blue Dot protection facilities for children and mothers, do assist in prevention and response to gender-based violence, identification and assistance to persons with specific needs and access to legal information and solutions (UNHCR 2016), they are not directed towards adolescents. Cultural differences, language barriers, unfamiliarity with the vocabulary of intimacy and economic and other forms of vulnerability in their host country also limit adolescent migrants' (especially males') ability to have their specific health needs addressed adequately. Being LGBT further complicates adolescent migrants' access to appropriate health information, commodities and services.

Life skills for unaccompanied adolescents

Non-formal education has made long-standing use of life skills support for youth. The life skills approach refers to the interactive process of teaching and learning, which focuses on acquiring knowledge, attitudes and skills which support behaviours that enable young people to take greater responsibility for their own lives; by making healthy life choices, gaining greater resistance to negative pressures, and minimising harmful behaviours. Those young refugees and migrants travelling along the path towards a host country in Europe are unlikely, as mentioned above concerning sexuality education, to be exposed to such non-formal or even informal educational opportunities. On the contrary, they will inevitably be exposed to the influence of peers and pimps.

In view of this, a life skills package for young refugees (depicted in Figure 2) based on WHO (1999) principles is being tested for its ability to provide basic information, skills and encouragement to unaccompanied adolescents to understand themselves and their situation, engage with others and participate to some extent with their respective societies while nonetheless recognising the complexity of their situation in an even more complex political and cultural context.[3]

Figure 2: outline of a 10-session life skills educational curriculum for young refugees

MODULE 1: Know and understand self
– Session 1.1: Health/hygiene/self-care
– Session 1.2: Emotions
– Session 1.3: Coping with stress
MODULE 2: Know and understand others
– Session 2.1: Identity/values
– Session 2.2: Sex and sexuality

3. www.faros.org.gr/.

– Session 2.3: Healthy relationships (interpersonal/community)/power

MODULE 3: Know and understand society

– Session 3.1: Communicating respect/social engagement/cultural awareness

– Session 3.2: Planning

– Session 3.3: Wild card, adolescent select

MODULE 4: The big picture/making connections

Economic and labour-market participation

Young people in general, and to no lesser extent young migrants and refugees, have a huge stake in sustainable development, not only as consumers but also as producers, decision makers and as the main labour force for the future. Therefore, their personal wellbeing is of prime importance to society and their involvement in the processes of sustainable development is vital. In this sense, projects and programmes that promote healthy youth development and the participation of young people in sustainable development initiatives are crucial for any society.

"Upcycling" (as distinct from recycling) is commonly defined as the reuse of a waste product in a new way without degrading the material it is made from. It is based on the principle that junk can be re-used for creating new products of higher value and design. "Upcycling" incubators take an innovative approach to health and work-life promotion based on core components of eco-social work such as social solidarity and sustainability. The idea provides a health-enabling and work-life supporting environment in a holistic and non-stigmatising manner within an inclusive environment. For example, an upcycling incubator provides training, empowerment and entrepreneurship skills. Enhancement of employability goes alongside health-support and health-enhancing services. Such projects already exist[4] whereby a multi-disciplinary team of social workers, clinical psychologists, career guidance workers, project administrators, engineers, designers, expert workers in wood, metal, clothing, plastic, organic materials and so on co-operate in bringing together young people from a range of diverse backgrounds (including evidently refugees) together under one roof.

Community gardening as an expression of youth environmental activism already captures attention in urban renewal centres and rural regeneration projects. Through the help and support of elders (retirees/pensioners) transmitting wisdom regarding the bio-physical environment, they can take on an inter-generational character. In addition to its potential for income-generation, community gardening is an eco-therapeutic activity *par excellence* and will almost certainly assist social integration and adaptation of young refugees who become involved. Bringing young refugees, youth environmentalists and elders together in community gardening will create opportunities for persons from diverse backgrounds to become acquainted and form relationships, thereby dissipating fear, uncertainties and stereotypes about each other. Eco-therapeutic activities are well suited for a number of vulnerable individuals and groups who may derive a variety of wellbeing benefits, as well as income, from such activities.

4. https://challenges.openideo.com/challenge/connected/concepting/upcycling.

Conclusion

Quality youth work not only requires sound theories and practical methodologies, but also sustainable partnership with committed principles for the welfare of all and of the planet. In the current situation, with large numbers of young people on the move into and across Europe, youth work needs to play its vital role in creating unity in diversity in Europe through partnership with other stakeholders. Hate crimes are the most severe expression of discrimination, a core fundamental rights abuse and shameful. Hate and fear can be dissipated through collaborative youth action. In particular, violence towards volunteers and caregivers, towards women and girls, towards lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons, all for complex reasons including radicalisation, need to be peacefully tackled.

Additionally, in the context of the current migrant and refugee displacement, adolescents subjected to or perpetrators of gender-based violence, sexual exploitation and abuse may become, *inter alia*, drawn in to violent extremism either through peer pressure, criminal gangs or the outreach of militant groups. If for no other reason, the contribution to refugee integration made by and through the youth sector merits careful design, planning, delivery and evaluation by youth organisations and government youth departments working together.

Youth work in Europe has long had a political voice, an ability to challenge systems and hold decision makers to account. Within this context the partners in the youth sector will inevitably increase their watchdog function concerning the rights of young people even as they carry out action research and project-based interventions and initiatives with young refugees. We hope that the present paper with its framework for youth work with young refugees will assist in the integration process.

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