

# **“Research on Youth Work Studies in Europe”**

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## INTRODUCTION

Youth work is a progressive field that provides space and opportunities for young people to shape their own future and has a very important role for encouraging young people to take responsibility for others, as well as getting engaged and involved in shaping society beyond individual interests. Youth sector employs many people working as full time, part-time, periodical/seasonal workers or on a voluntary basis. In Europe, we only find a few countries with well-established youth work policies and structures, governed by public authorities with paid youth workers, developed vocational training and higher education curricula for youth workers. Youth Work in Europe started to develop intensively in the last decades, mainly through civil society organisation. Up to now, civil society organisations kept their position as the main providers of Youth Work. With the increasing number and scope of Youth Work projects, the need for professionalism, standardisation, and quality assurance work within the CSOs became a necessity. This created a demand for professional youth workers and related studies at the Universities.

This document aims to provide an overview on the present situation.

- A definition of youth work with a brief introduction to the policy frameworks in different countries and European level;
- A step forward in defining “youth worker” as a profession; overview and analysis of studies of youth work;
- Pin-point arising challenges and changes that should be addressed in the new curricula.

Those elements will provide a basis to reflect on the understanding of “youth work” as a profession and define the most important domains / fields of activity in the youth work. In addition, it will be used to identify the areas that need improvement in “youth work” and serve as the basis for the development of training programmes that will lead the way to the improvement of practice. This initiative focuses on paid, employed youth workers and whilst some of the concepts can be applied equally to youth leaders/workers acting in a voluntary basis.

## EU POLICY FRAMEWORK

The process leading to the validation and certification of the youth worker qualifications acquired in and through non-formal and informal learning. This has been instigated at the European level with the policy initiatives from both the Council of Europe and the European Commission, inspired by diverse traditions and experiences in different European countries.

The European Commission White Paper entitled 'A new impetus for European Youth' (21 November 2001), sets out a new framework for European co-operation on youth affairs and stressed the importance of non-formal learning and education. The European social partners' 'Framework of actions for the lifelong development of competences and qualifications' (14th March 2002) underlines the point that the recognition and validation of competences and qualifications is both a shared objective and a main priority for action at the European level.<sup>1</sup>

It was followed by a resolution identifying the need to increase those qualifications that are of the great importance for individuals and the social development of European citizens: "The identification and validation of the non-formal and informal learning serves the needs of the individual learner. They support social integration, employability and the development and use of human resources in civic, social and economic contexts. They also meet the specific needs of those individuals who seek integration or re-integration into education and training, the labour market and society."<sup>2</sup>

The 2009 Recommendation of the EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT and of the EU COUNCIL on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) explains that the "Recommendation is to create a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training ('ECVET') intended to facilitate the transfer, recognition and accumulation of assessed learning outcomes of individuals who are aiming to achieve a qualification. This will improve the general understanding of citizens learning outcomes and their transparency, transnational mobility and portability across and, where appropriate, within Member States in a borderless lifelong learning area, and will also improve the mobility and portability of qualifications at national level between various sectors of the economy and within

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<sup>1</sup> European Commission "White paper, new impetus on European Youth":  
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2001:0681:FIN:EN:PDF>

<sup>2</sup> Resolution of the Council of European Union, Brussels 2004;  
[http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/validation2004\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/validation2004_en.pdf)

the labour market; furthermore, it will contribute to the development and expansion of European cooperation in education and training. ”<sup>3</sup>

Finally, the latest developments in this policy field also suggest an approach to youth work from a need to give recognition to professional youth workers, addressing the issue with instruments and actions: “Youth work is managed by professional or voluntary youth workers and youth leaders. The new EU Youth Strategy for the first time addresses **youth work as a profession** and youth workers as a particular target group”. <sup>4</sup>

## DEFINITION OF YOUTH WORK

Not all countries in Europe regulate youth work by law or have a specific Youth Work Act. Austria, Estonia, Germany, Ireland, Norway and Romania have specific legislation that establishes a framework for the provision of youth work. In Greece, Italy and Spain, youth work is endorsed in various laws, mainly in legislation regarding youth employment and education. In the Netherlands, youth law regulates care, while leisure-time-oriented youth work is traditionally less exposed to the influence of the state and thus remains less regulated. In general, it can be stated that youth work is part of both the welfare and the educational system, and in some countries, such as Italy, Greece and Spain, there are also intersections with the employment policy sector and – in Italy and Greece – also with the health system. In Greece, there is no specific legal framework for the recognition of youth work and Greek youth workers created the "Greek Association of Youth Workers" in order to achieve the first recognition of the profession by the state.

In Cyprus as well, there is no legal framework for the recognition of youth work, though the Ministry of Education currently launched a process for the recognition of Non Formal Education which is perceived as the first step towards the validation of Youth Work in Cyprus.

Portugal has recently implemented (December 2015) a new professional profile of youth worker.<sup>5</sup> In Poland, a profession of youth

<sup>3</sup> RECOMMENDATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE EU COUNCIL on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET), 2009:

[http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/documents/EKCYP/Youth\\_Policy/docs/Youth\\_Training\\_Learning/Policy/Recommendation\\_establishment\\_of\\_a\\_European\\_credit\\_system\\_for\\_VET\\_2009.pdf](http://youth-partnership-eu.coe.int/youth-partnership/documents/EKCYP/Youth_Policy/docs/Youth_Training_Learning/Policy/Recommendation_establishment_of_a_European_credit_system_for_VET_2009.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> European Commission. Youth Policy Department, definition of youth work: [http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-policies/youth-work\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-policies/youth-work_en.htm)

<sup>5</sup> <http://juventude.gov.pt/Eventos/EducacaoFormacao/Paginas/Tecnico-Juventude-Novo-Perfil-Profissional.aspx>

worker as such does not exist, whereas in Estonia there are different levels of youth workers profession recognised. On the other hand, in Turkey there are no real legal frameworks nor is the profession officially recognised. However, the Ministry of Youth and Sport has been established and supposedly this action will lead to further changes in regard to youth work recognition. By examining the case of Belgium, one faces incoherence between regional and national solutions as well as between different governmental stakeholders responsible for creation of youth policies frameworks.

Some of the reasons for the inconsistent definition of youth work may be the traditional absence of youth policy in some countries and the tradition of self-determination and process-related development of the youth work sector in some other countries. In addition, the growing necessity to deal with socio-economic changes in society and to address problems of social exclusion has constantly influenced the development and adaptation of youth work.

In Serbia, as well as in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the 3 levels of the professional youth worker have been recognised by Statistical bureau. The National Association of Youth Workers (NAPOR) defines the purpose of youth work as "to support young people in the process of becoming independent, so the youth worker assists in the personal and social development in order to become active members of society and participants in the decision-making process"<sup>6</sup>.

The definition of youth work regulated by law was also found in Ireland: "Planned Programme of Education designed for the purpose of 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"<sup>7</sup>.

Germany defines youth work by law as well: "Youth Work offers for young people a support for their development by picking up their interests allowing codetermination, fostering self-definition and encouraging social responsibility and participation."

According to Peter Lauritzen, who was the Head of the Youth Unit of Council of Europe's Directorate of Youth and Sport, "The main

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<sup>6</sup> Source: NAPOR, Serbia, 2011

[http://napor.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=10&Itemid=11](http://napor.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10&Itemid=11)

<sup>7</sup> Ireland, Definition of youth work by law:

<http://www.nonformality.org/blog/wp-content/uploads/2007/11/definitions.pdf>

objective of youth work is to provide opportunities for young people to shape their own future. Youth work is a summary expression for activities with and for young people of a social, cultural, educational or political nature. Increasingly, youth work activities also include sports and services for young people. Youth work belongs to the domain of **'out-of-school' education**, most commonly referred to as either non-formal or informal learning. The general aims of youth work are the integration and inclusion of young people in society. It may also aim towards the personal and social emancipation of young people from dependency and exploitation. Youth Work belongs both to the social welfare and to the educational systems.”<sup>8</sup>

Lauritzen also emphasized and drew attention to the fact that: “Today, the difficulty within state systems to adequately ensure global access to education and the labour market, means that youth work increasingly deals with unemployment, educational failure, marginalization and social exclusion. Increasingly, youth work overlaps with the area of social services previously undertaken by the Welfare State. It, therefore, includes work on aspects such as education, employment, assistance and guidance, housing, mobility, criminal justice and health, as well as the more traditional areas of participation, youth politics, cultural activities, career guidance, leisure and sports.”<sup>9</sup>

According to a very comprehensive piece of research from the Youth Partnership of European Commission and Council of Europe, “In general we can state that in all European countries youth work is defined as a domain of **'out-of school' education and thus linked to non-formal or informal learning**, the most of the definitions contain two basic orientations reflecting a double concern: to provide favourable (leisure time oriented) experiences (of social, cultural, educational or political nature) in order to strengthen young people's personal development and foster their personal and social autonomy, and at the same time to offer opportunities for the integration and inclusion of young people in adult society by fostering societal integration in general or preventing the exclusion of disadvantaged groups.”<sup>10</sup>

<sup>8</sup> June 2006, Peter Lauritzen, Council of Europe's Directorate of Youth and Sport:  
<http://www.nonformality.org/2006/06/defining-youth-work/>

<sup>9</sup> June 2006, Peter Lauritzen, Council of Europe's Directorate of Youth and Sport:  
<http://www.nonformality.org/2006/06/defining-youth-work/>

<sup>10</sup> Ireland, Definition of youth work by law:  
<http://www.nonformality.org/blog/wp-content/uploads/2007/11/definitions.pdf>

The definition of the youth work of the European Commission follows the same lines: "Youth work provides opportunities for young people to shape their own futures. It is a broad term covering a large scale of activities of a social, cultural, educational or political nature, but also sports and services for young people. Youth work is also a space for young people to come together and associate. Youth work has an impact on young people's life and helps them to reach their full potential. It contributes to their personal development, but also facilitates social and educational development. It enables them to develop their voice, influence and place in society."<sup>11</sup>

Taking into account all the above mentioned definitions of "youth work" and its purpose, we can conclude that:

*The **main purpose of youth work** is to support young people in the process of becoming independent. The youth worker plays an important role in giving and providing support and assists in the personal, social and educational development of young people in order to help them to be better prepared to face challenges in life and become active citizens in society.*

The main role of youth work is to create a safe environment and opportunities for the active participation of young people. In this way, youth work provides learning spaces through programmes that are need-centred and have a social-constructivist approach. These different processes give young people the opportunity to gain competences, skills, experiences and knowledge that could be important for the success in life.

## KEY AREAS OF YOUTH WORK

In order to develop the key responsibilities of youth workers it can be concluded that some of the main aspects of youth work are the following:

- It is facilitated by youth workers who can be in paid employment or be unpaid volunteers;
- The processes and programmes for young people are mostly taking place in Civil Society Organisations or State Institutions for youth;
- Mostly uses non-formal education as a tool to plan and implement activities;

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<sup>11</sup> European Commission. Youth Policy Department, definition of youth work: [http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-policies/youth-work\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-policies/youth-work_en.htm)



- Creates a safe environment for the growth, development and well-being of young people;
- Stimulates non-violent responses and approaches and develops conflict transformation skills;
- Creates opportunities for young people in different learning programmes;
- Provides information and a space for the cooperation amongst young people;
- Creates synergies among different stakeholders to enrich and develop the youth field;
- Engages young people in the creation and implementation of the policies that affect them;

Youth workers should have the following characteristics:

- (a) Factual and theoretical knowledge in a broad context of youth work;
- (b) The knowledge and understanding of the background and the specific target group they are working with;
- (c) An ability to supervise the activities of young people and support their personal development;
- (d) The knowledge of policy frameworks, as well as specific laws and state programs connected to youth and target groups (e.g.: youth in corrective institutions or orphanages);
- (e) Youth workers need to be able to develop and coordinate projects for young people through a variety of activities and projects in the community that are created on the basis of social, behavioural and health development, and security needs of young people;
- (f) Every youth worker needs to be able to take a leadership not only in the group of youth s/he is supervising, but also in projects and decision making processes;
- (g) Youth Worker skills range needs to cover ability to observe and immediately notice a wide range of negative influences and changes among youth (such as radicalisation, skipping school, depression, etc. ), ability to mentor, counselling, pedagogical and psychological skills, management skills, change management skills;

According to research of the Organization Y.E.U. International (year of research), the "required qualifications" can be divided into 8 groups as follows:

- Fostering personal, social and educational development of young people  
Empowering young people to actively participate in society and

- decision-making processes
- Promoting equality and well-being of young people
- Development of strategies and policies to ensure the systematic care for young people and create the conditions for the exercise of their rights
- Planning, development and management of programmes in youth work
- Self-management and management of teams
- Supporting the development of effective, efficient and ethical practice in youth work
- Promotion of the mobility, International cooperation and networking in European context

## **KNOWLEDGE**

- Basics of youth work in the community (history, values and principles of youth work in the community, the dynamics of working with individuals and groups, management of groups and organizations, the basics of the project cycle and networking);
- Knowledge of various types of activities to engage and work with young people (public actions, festivals, exchanges, forums, etc.);
- Basic knowledge of the existence of different approaches in working with diverse groups of young people;
- Knowledge of procedures for the protection and safety of young people;
- Knowledge of the Code of Ethics for Youth Work;
- Theory of project cycle management;
- Advanced level in the field of youth work including theory, typology of youth work, the principles of social education, etc;
- The special needs and specifics of different target groups (for example, young people with migrant background, youth with disabilities, youth from rural areas, etc.)
- Pedagogical principles of mentoring and counselling of young people;
- The community in which youth activities take place, as well as the characteristics of the various relevant social groups;
- The procedures for the protection and safety and well being of young people;
- The Code of Ethics in Youth Work;
- Basic theory of community development;
- Quality volunteer management;

## SKILLS

- Basic communication skills: active listening and giving feedback;
- Basic ICT skills (Internet, Word, Excel, PowerPoint, etc.)
- Able to animate small groups of young people through the implementation of social games and the realisation of leisure activities with the primary aim of providing fun;
- Able to facilitate short workshops and meetings with young people;
- Able to prepare and run presentations related to some content on a topic such as youth participation, ecology, etc.
- Able to take part in planning workshops taking in account the needs of the group;
- Able to manage activities foreseen in the project under the given guidelines;
- Organizational and management (coordination of activities, projects and programs);
- Advanced Communication (facilitation, active listening, giving and receiving feedback);
- Advanced ICT;
- Able to use Coaching, Mentoring and Counselling techniques when working with young people;
- Able to prepare and run presentations related to the youth work, policy and educational matters or content wise topics such as project management, citizenship, youth participation, inclusion, etc;
- Leadership (ability to lead teams and groups, etc.);

## COMPETENCES

- Ability to organize workshops, educational or outdoor activities for young people;
- Ability to transfer acquired knowledge and provide information to young people;
- Support the coordinator/senior youth worker in leading the team or group;
- Assistance in coordinating youth projects;
- Motivating young people to actively participate in community life or/and youth projects;
- Ability to work effectively in the team;
- Able to self-organise his/her time, tasks, efficient time management;

- Creating educational programs based on the needs of young people;
- Effective work in intercultural teams;
- Advanced management of human and material resources;
- Ability to map requirements and actors necessary for community development;
- Create guidelines and procedures to ensure effective and efficient implementation of the youth activities, initiatives and projects;
- Ability to establish contacts with different groups of young people and stakeholders working with/for youth;

## **Overview of the Youth Studies in Europe**

Youth Work studies are best developed and most widely offered in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland, where almost every university offers such a course. Alongside Youth work studies, many universities offer combined degrees enabling people to work in this sector, such as applied psychology and criminology, community psychology, social work, working with children, etc. Depending on the university courses, the stress is put on different areas of working in that sector. However, almost all of them provide a mixture of theory and practice (e.g.: in case of BA studies practical part takes place on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year). In this way students have the ability to apply theoretical knowledge and turn it into practice. On the other hand, in Finland and other Scandinavian countries, there is only one course on Youth Work available. Youth workers are able to follow studies in Social Services which its study programme aims to train professionals who will be able to work with marginalized or disadvantaged people and communities, especially in the Central and Eastern European region. Graduates will have a broad view of the society, which will enable them to develop their work in response to the rapid changes that are affecting people and communities. The course also integrates learning about the contribution of theology and spirituality to social service and diaconal work.

The above mentioned studies offer a more social pedagogical framework approach to youth workers. A different approach can be found in Poland, where every university offers studies of Pedagogy. In the due course of those studies, students have the chance to specialize themselves in different sectors such as kinder garden teaching or special pedagogy which aims at its graduates to work with people with

disadvantages, marginalized youth or youth with problems with very often pathological background. Graduates of such specialization programmes can work in orphanages, governmental youth crisis centers (where youth taken away from their parents), while waiting for a placement in a foster family, lives, etc. All in all, the main focus of the programme is the train people in order to work with problematic youth. Those studies do not cover preparation to work with youth as such.

In Austria, BA programmes offer a wide range of career opportunities including assistance and support to those with personal, family, financial and community related problems. Graduates are qualified to work in Youth Welfare, Legal Guardianship, Patient / Client Legal Representation, Parole, Out-of-Court Settlement, as well as in counselling and advocacy.<sup>12</sup>

Belgian universities offer more theoretical studies in social work, aiming to train people for working in the social sector in general without any specialization in youth work possible.

In Germany youth work is classified under Social Work. Depending on the course, students can follow social work, social work with diaconal work or management of social services. German approach is that task of social work is to demand participation in society and equal opportunities and to achieve, how to make social, economic, cultural and political participation and to guarantee.

## **BA and MA Youth Work Programmes - The need for Professionalization**

### ***Introduction***

The evolution of youth work as a profession, lies within the intersection of three overlapping circles, specifically; the social policy agenda, the civil society elements and the academic discourses. Furthermore, this theory will be applied to all the social professions because the advance of the society and of the nation state enhanced the need for society to adapt its labour force and its social profession to the new societal needs (Lorenz, 2006). Professionalism is fully defined for the formal organization of society. There is no possibility, for a democratic

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<sup>12</sup> University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria, Linz , Austria , Available at: <http://www.bachelorsportal.eu/studies/16254/social-work.html>, last retrieved March 30, 2016.

society, to function relying solemnly on its formal dimension, sustained by the economy. Another dimension is absolutely required in the form of the civil society (Habermas, 1998). This dimension will entice the social needs that the formal society is not able to provide. The civil society consists of formal groups – mainly organisations and informal groups. Both use volunteering as an existential resource. If volunteering is able to cover the societal needs that the social professions cannot (Walzer, 1998), than what is the balance between these two dimensions of volunteerism and professionalism and what is the future development of this issue?

The traditional sociology of professions defines professionalization as the appropriate means to organize work. For this organisational structure, at least four main factors are of importance: (a) a central regulatory body to ensure standard of performance of individual members, (b) a code of conduct, (c) careful management of knowledge in relation to the expertise which constitutes the basis of the professional activities and (d) the control of selection and training of new entrants (Marshall, 1998).

Baker (1995) defines a profession as, a group of people who use a common system of values, skills, techniques, knowledge and beliefs to meet a specific social need. The public comes to identify this group as being suited to fulfil this need. Its formal and legal recognition is achieved through licensing or other sanctions as the legitimate source for providing the relevant service. The group enhances its public credibility by expanding the body of knowledge which is accessible to its members, by redefining its skills and values, by ensuring that its members comply with established standards and publishing the actions it takes to reach set goals. Within this definition, a professional can be defined as an individual who qualifies for membership in a specific profession and uses its practices, knowledge and skills to provide services to client systems and in doing so always adheres to its values and code of ethics (Baker, 1995).

The practical side of defining a profession also needs to be examined. The objectives that are meant here are; education, regulation and control by the state, control of standards by professional bodies, independence from non-professionals concerning professional issues and ethical standards that are controlled by professional organisations (Otte, 2007).

The area chosen for this study; youth work has different approaches in different countries and it also benefit differently of social recognition. Consequently, it was challenging to find a definition that would

encompass all areas of youth work as they are found in all countries involved with the project. Lauritzen's (2006) definition was able to combine all different aspects of youth work. He claims youth work entails all of the following. "The main objective of youth work is to provide opportunities for young people to shape their own futures. Youth work is a summary expression for activities with and for young people of a social, cultural, educational or political nature. Increasingly, youth work activities also include sports and services for young people". He goes on and argues that youth work belongs to the domain 'out of school' education, most commonly referred to as either non-formal or informal learning. The general aims of youth work are the integration and inclusion of young people in society. It may also aim towards the personal and social emancipation of young people from dependency and exploitation (Lauritzen, 2006). According to Lauritzen, youth work belongs to the social welfare and to the educational systems. In some countries it is regulated by law and administered by state civil servants, in particular at local level. However, there exists an important relation between these professional and voluntary workers which is at times antagonistic, and at others, cooperative (Lauritzen, 2006). The definition of youth work is diverse. While it is recognised, promoted and financed by public authorities in many European countries, it has only a marginal status in others where it remains of an entirely voluntary nature. What is considered in one country to be the work of traditional 'youth workers' - be it as professionals or volunteers - may be carried out by consultants in another, or by neighborhood and families in yet another country or, indeed, not at all (Lauritzen, 2006).

### Youth Work - early stirrings

To be able to put a cross-national framework in place, attention had to be given to the development of youth work. Even though this differs greatly in countries, the following can be stated about the development of youth work in general. The origin of youth work can be found in the "Sunday Schools". During the last years of the eighteenth century, these schools closely associated with churches and chapels, developed the first methods of informal and non-formal learning by attaching activities like team sports and day-trips to the formal curricula. The "Sunday Schools" evolved and became so-called "ragged schools", in the first half of the nineteenth century. Following Lorenz's theory (2001) concerning the development of social professions according to the evolution of the nation state and the importance of the settlement movements in developing the social



professions. In Great Britain, these schools were first established in 1601 as a consequence of the Elizabethan "Poor Law". This aimed at helping the deserving poor and developed charity settlements (Lorenz, 2001). The schools were run by volunteers, who intended to involve as many children and youngsters into the education system, who by poverty or by virtue could not access other forms of education. Education was given in railway arches, church halls and run-down houses. As this evolved towards a more organizational structure the first form of youth work that can be identified is the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), established in 1844 and fully dedicated to youngsters. Even if these movements are mainly focused on the UK, it can be seen that these events influenced the rest of the continent. The separation of society and religion, which originated from the French Revolution, produced changes in the academic discourse of the UK (Lorenz, 2008). Furthermore, even though the evolution of youth work was greatly influenced by the Christian-evangelic dimension, the societal growth influenced the academic discourse concerning youth work. In 1890 the first articles can be found about youth problems and youth as a coherent category. Psychologists, such as G. Stanley Hall (1890) initiated the development of theories about adolescence. These theories advocated that professionals should work with youngsters as a separate group with specific needs.

The first publication highlighting the importance of youth working was the "Albemarle Report" in 1960. The report highlighted the significance of youth clubs or youth centers. It argued that the primary aims of the youth service should be; associations, trainings and challenges (Smith, 2002).

### ***Scouting – from volunteering to professionalization of youth working***

As a first association of non-religious movements with an impact on the whole continent, at the beginning of 1900s, Baden-Powell established the scout movement. It can be claimed that the scouts were the first coherent movement towards the professionalization of youth work. By 1912 there were some 128,000 scouts and nearly 5000 scoutmasters. By 1930 there were nearly 390,000 scouts and cubs and nearly 35,000 scout leaders. Baden-Powell also responded to requests of young women and established the guides (formally in 1910). In many respects, scouting can be identified as the first mass youth movement in Britain. Moreover, the scouts developed the first techniques in non-formal learning, which is a form of education that



had the attributes of an association. High significance was placed on adventure, on children and young people working together - and taking responsibility (Smith, 2002).

Today, the difficulty within state systems to adequately ensure global access to education and the labor market means that youth work increasingly deals with unemployment, educational failure, marginalization and social exclusion. Consequently, youth work overlaps with the area of social services previously undertaken by the welfare state. Thus, it now includes aspects of education, employment, assistance and guidance, housing, mobility, criminal justice and health, as well as the more traditional areas of participation, youth politics, cultural activities, career guidance, leisure and sports. Youth work often seeks to reach out to particular groups of young people such as disadvantaged youth in socially deprived neighborhoods, or immigrant youth including refugees and asylum seekers. (Lauritzen, 2006).

## BA Programmes in Youth Work

The UK case could be an excellent model to be scaled up for any of the systems that are looking for recognition and validation of youth work as a profession. The National Youth Agency (NYA) is the body which ensures that "Young people –all young people -deserve a productive, fulfilling future. Society needs the spark and energy of young people to make it tick. Yet somehow thousands of young people feel blocked by the complex, sometimes disheartening challenges the modern world throws at them." (National Youth Agency, UK). Defining youth work as the science of enabling young people to believe in themselves and to prepare for life, the NYA's activities are planned on 3 key elements:

1. Championing youth work in all its many forms – incubating new approaches, celebrating its many thousands of practitioners.
2. Professionalising youth work – training youth workers, setting occupational standards.
3. Enabling youth work – making it happen through our networks of front line youth work providers.<sup>13</sup>

NYA has a long-standing history as it started in 1964 as an information center of the youth services at the National College for the Training of Youth Leaders in Leicester and in 1970 became the National Youth Bureau. Since 1991, it has the status of the National Youth Agency, being mainly funded by the national and local government.

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<sup>13</sup> National Youth Agency, Available at <<http://www.nya.org.uk/about-us/>> , last retrieved April 2, 2016.

In the 1970s it became the National Youth Bureau and then in 1991 the National Youth Agency. At that point its activity is focused on providing information for practitioners and young people. Funding came primarily from national and local government. Nowadays, NYA is a modern and effective youth intermediary charity with a turnover of £10m and when it comes to youth work recognition, is the main expert on youth policy and youth work in England.

The degree programmes in youth work in the UK, except for NYA's validation, are also under the rules and regulations of the "Joint Negotiating Committee" (JNC) for youth and community workers, which is the body that sets the national framework and used to grade and pay youth work jobs. There are two grades within the JNC framework:

- youth support worker
- professional youth worker

In terms of recognition, JNC recognizes youth and community workers' qualifications which have been professionally approved by the Education Training Standards (ETS) Committee of the National Youth Agency. Consequently, JNC endorses youth support worker qualifications and has a process of professional validation for higher education programmes. The validation helps to develop youth work practitioners that can meet the needs of young people and employers in the youth work field. Training encourages the development of an individual practitioner and supports them to move from youth support worker (levels 2 and 3) to professional youth worker (level 6 and above).<sup>14</sup>

In order to come up with a list of BA programmes in Youth Work in the UK, the main criteria used to list down the programmes was that the training offered by the Universities did have the recognition of NYA and of the JNC.

## **BA and MA Programmes in Youth Work and Community Development offered by Universities**

In this section, a list of BA Programmes regarding Youth Work and Community Development offered by Universities World Wide is presented:

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<sup>14</sup> The Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC), Available at: <<http://www.nya.org.uk/careers-youth-work/getting-qualified/joint-negotiating-committee-jnc/>> , last retrieved April 2, 2016.

**University of Brighton** is offering the opportunity to trainees or part-time youth workers to get their University degree that is also endorsed by the National Youth Agency. It also offers the professionalization required by the Joint Negotiation Committee framework for youth and community workers. Essential to the degree programme is the placement experience for the 3 years of study, excellently balancing the studies and the practical work.<sup>15</sup>

**The Open University** presents the programme BA (Honors) in Youth Work as the degree that would help one to get the knowledge and skills needed for a career in youth work. The programme includes three stages. The first stage is dedicated to understanding the scope of youth work, the values and the working principles in youth work as well as the role and the responsibilities of the practitioners and policy makers and the next 2 stages are more practice oriented.<sup>16</sup>

**University of Gloucestershire** runs the BA Youth Work programme under the Faculty of Applied Sciences and offers an excellent description of the programme, of the knowledge and skills that one would acquire and also on the learning outcomes at the end of the process. Moreover, the teaching techniques are combining elements of Independent and collaborative learning; Learning for life and employment; Learning for the future; Research/practice informed learning and teaching.<sup>17</sup>

**Newman University** is the main provider of accredited youth work training in the West Midland and provides programmes for youth workers on a wide range of specializations. Both the JNC recognized programmes and the ones subject to recognition offer the students the opportunity to get a deep understanding of the policies and practices in the field as well as the specific competencies to work with different target groups as well as to running youth organizations. The courses of interest are the following:

- ❖ Youth and Community Work - Undergraduate - BA (Hons) 3 years full-time, 4.5 years flexible learning -
- ❖ Youth and Community Work - professionally based BA (Hons) Undergraduate - BA (Hons) 2 years full-time, 3 years (plus half a semester) part-time

<sup>15</sup> University of Brighton - Youth Work BA (Hons), Available at: <<https://www.brighton.ac.uk/courses/study/youth-work-ba-hons.aspx>>, last retrieved April 4, 2016.

<sup>16</sup> The Open University - BA (Honours) Youth Work - Available at: <<http://www.open.ac.uk/courses/qualifications/q55>>, last retrieved April 4, 2016.

<sup>17</sup> University of Gloucestershire - BA Youth Work - Available at: <<http://progspecs.glos.ac.uk/Live/15-16/YWK/001%20Youth%20Work.pdf>>, last retrieved April 4, 2016.

- ❖ Youth and Community Work full-time top-up award, Undergraduate - BA (Hons), 1 year full-time
- ❖ Youth and Community Work top-up award (JNC recognised) or Youth Studies top-up award (not JNC recognised), Undergraduate - BA (Hons), 1-2 years part-time
- ❖ Youth Studies full-time top-up award, Undergraduate - BA (Hons), 1 year full-time
- ❖ Chaplaincy With Young People Postgraduate - PG Cert, 1 year (flexible) part-time, blended learning
- ❖ Youth and Community Work, Postgraduate - MA PG Dip, 1-2 years full-time, 2-3 years part-time
- ❖ Working with Children, Young People and Families, Undergraduate - BA (Hons), 3 years full-time, 4.5 years flexible learning.<sup>18</sup>

**University of Huddersfield** offers the students the opportunity to get the required knowledge and expertise in working with young people, community groups and partnerships, at the end of the studies in Youth and Community Work being awarded the professional Youth Work qualification endorsed by the National Youth Agency and recognised by the Joint Negotiating Committee for Youth and Community Work. The courses include subjects such as: including education, learning and development, society and how groups and communities interact, social policy and inclusion, understanding government policies, current theories and strategies relating to young people, including those seeking to prevent child sexual exploitation and violent extremism.<sup>19</sup>

**De Montfort University, Leicester** BA programme in Youth and Community Development allows one both to get the transferable skills required in a wide range of areas but also to work with professionals in practical work during the placements. The transferable skills and employment opportunities, at the end of the Programme include: Detached Youth Work, Community Development, Work with

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<sup>18</sup> Newman University - BA Youth Work Courses, Available at: <<http://www.newman.ac.uk/youth-work/2191>>, last retrieved April 4, 2016.

<sup>19</sup> Youth and Community Work BA(Hons) at the University of Huddersfield, Available at: <<http://www.hud.ac.uk/courses/full-time/undergraduate/youth-and-community-work-ba-hons/>>, last retrieved April 4, 2016.

Homeless/Hostels, Schools and Colleges, Work with Refugee & Asylum Seekers, Mentoring, The Art, Health, Youth Justice Work<sup>20</sup>

**University of Sunderland** has a successful 40-year record of training youth workers and offers the students the opportunity to get the essential theories of youth work, management, supervision, research rigor, group work and the policy context. If the first two years of study would include more theories and main elements of youth work practices, in the 3rd year, the students get the chance to become familiar to the basic theories of project management and entrepreneurship as well as to education for transformation theories.<sup>21</sup>

**University of Derby - BA (Hons) Working with Youth People and Communities** is designed to help graduates to respond to the problems of homelessness, poverty, drug misuse, crime and abuse, having combined the theoretical training with the experience of the practical placements into different environments, agencies and organisations including youth centres, alternative education providers, multi-agency teams, hospitals, the armed forces, faith organisations and the voluntary sector. The programme is structured into two pathways:

- The Youth Work Pathway: for those wanting to specialise in work with young people and gain a nationally recognised professional award
- The Community Development Pathway: for those wanting a community-based career working with all age ranges.<sup>22</sup>

**Maynooth University - National University of Ireland Maynooth** offers a specialized degree in Community and Youth Work, covering a range of topics accompanied by supervised fieldwork including both placements in Ireland and internationally. At the end of the studies, the graduates will also be equipped with attitudes such as social

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<sup>20</sup> BA programme in Youth and Community Development, Available at: <http://www.dmu.ac.uk/study/courses/undergraduate-courses/youth-work-community-development-ba-hons-degree/youth-work-community-development-ba-hons.aspx>, last retrieved April 4, 2016.

<sup>21</sup> Community and Youth Work Studies BA (Hons), Available at: [http://www.sunderland.ac.uk/courses/educationandsociety/undergraduate/community-youth-work-studies/#tab\\_content](http://www.sunderland.ac.uk/courses/educationandsociety/undergraduate/community-youth-work-studies/#tab_content), last retrieved April 5, 2016.

<sup>22</sup> University of Derby, BA (Hons) Working with Youth People and Communities, Available at: <http://www.derby.ac.uk/social-and-community-studies-courses/working-with-young-people-and-communities-ba-hons/>, last retrieved April 5, 2016.

awareness, sound analytical skills and ability to plan, organize and work effectively in teams.<sup>23</sup>

**University of Chester - BA Youth Work** is being presented as a unique course offering professional and vocational training and degree qualification in youth work. Except for the youth work certification, the course also affords the opportunity to gain additional certification in areas such as ASDAN, Child Protection and First Aid. The courses also include the opportunity to get familiar with the legal and policies related to the Youth Offending teams and the Juvenile Justice system, an understanding of the importance and uniqueness of the Voluntary Sector role in youth work, and an awareness of the faith based organisations relation to youth work provision. More than this, the youth workers get to learn how to develop inclusive and participatory practice to enhance and enable young people's skills, interests, confidence and voice. The course integrates four complementary and interlocking strands: a) Youth Work theory and practice; b) Understanding of young people, their needs, growth and development; c) Legal, Social and Professional contexts; d) Fieldwork practice / placements.<sup>24</sup>

**Leeds Beckett University - BA (Hons) - Youth Work & Community Development (JNC)** is designed to equip youth workers with the required competencies to answer to the local, national and global challenges youth and communities are facing. The programme is also open to mature applicants who are able to demonstrate academic potential.<sup>25</sup>

**University of Hull - Youth work and Community Development** - at the end of the programme, the graduates gain an academic degree and two professional qualifications – one for youth work and one for community development and the training curricula offers subjects such as ethics, values and reflective practice in the first year, youth and community justice, global context and international practice in the second year and politics, policy and action in the third year.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Maynooth University - National University of Ireland Maynooth, BA in Community and Youth work, Available at: <<https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/study-maynooth/undergraduate-studies/courses/ba-community-and-youth-work-full-time#tabs-options>>, last retrieved: April 6, 2016.

<sup>24</sup> University of Chester, BA in Youth Work, Available at: <<http://www.chester.ac.uk/undergraduate/youthwork>>, last retrieved: April 4, 2016.

<sup>25</sup> Leeds Beckett University, BA Youth Work and Community Development, Available at: <<http://courses.leedsbeckett.ac.uk/youthdevelopmentjnc>>, last retrieved: April 4, 2016.

<sup>26</sup> **University of Hull** - Youth work and Community Development, Available at: <<http://www2.hull.ac.uk/pgmi2/ug/courses/community-youth-studies.aspx>>, last retrieved April 4, 2016.



**University of London, B.A.** Applied Social Science, Community Development and Youth Work BA (Hons) places great emphasis on participation and practice, and expects one to take responsibility for own learning process. The programme integrates academic study and combines the theoretical disciplines of community development and community and youth work with the development of practice skills and experience, including fieldwork as well as coursework. A central theme of the programme is to examine and analyse contemporary social issues including race, gender, culture and social policy from a range of disciplines within the social sciences, and their impact on the professional role.<sup>27</sup>

**YMCA George Williams College London** offers a wide range of courses for the ones working with young people and communities. The programmes had been designed to suit different levels of ability and interests.

- ❖ Level 1 Certificate in an Introduction to Youth Work (ABC) - (2 units available)
- ❖ Level 2 Certificate in Youth Work Practice (OCN & ABC) (for agencies and groups of students)
- ❖ Level 3 Diploma in Youth Work Practice (OCN & ABC)
- ❖ Level 3 Award in Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS)
- ❖ BA (Hons) Youth Work and Community Learning and Development (JNC)
- ❖ BA (Hons) Education and Learning (Youth Work and Community Learning and Development) (JNC)
- ❖ BA (Hons) Social Pedagogy (Youth Work and Community Learning and Development) (JNC)
- ❖ Level 7 Certificate in Professional Studies in Supervision
- ❖ Level 7 Certificate in Strategic Leadership and Management
- ❖ Level 7 Certificate in Leadership, Coaching and Mentoring
- ❖ PG Dip / MA Youth Work and Community Learning and Development (JNC and non-JNC)
- ❖ MA Reflective Leadership and Management.<sup>28</sup>

The youth work development in Finland started in 1972 when the youth work act has been enacted. The legislation has been reformed every ten years (1986, 1995 and 2006). The recent Youth Act

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<sup>27</sup> **University of London, B.A.** Applied Social Science, Community Development and Youth Work BA (Hons), Available at: <<http://www.bachelorsportal.eu/studies/19921/applied-social-science-community-development-and-youth-work-ba.html#tab:contents>>, last retrieved April 6, 2016.

<sup>28</sup> YMCA George Williams College London, Available at: <<http://www.ymca.ac.uk/index.php?pageid=8>>, last retrieved: April 5, 2016.

(72/2006) includes support for young people's growth and independence, promotion of active citizenship, social empowerment of young people and improvement of their growth and living conditions. The State Provincial Offices are the authorities in charge with the functionality of the youth work and policy issues at regional level, whereas local authorities have local responsibility. In terms of youth workers training, the BA studies equip youth workers with the required competencies to work with young people, competencies in line with the existent policy provisions of the Youth Act. (Helve, 2012)

***Humak University of Applied Sciences***, Helsinki, Finland - Bachelor Youth Work and Social Equality. Differently than the above described programmes, Humak University BA focuses on methods for empowerment and the topics of social inclusion and early intervention. Active citizenship and equality are other areas of focus during the programme. The Training programme Topics covered include sociology, psychology, educational science, social policy and social pedagogy. Previous studies in the field of youth and community work, NGO's and civic activity, social work or education are recommended.<sup>29</sup>

***University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria, Linz , Austria*** - The BA programme offers a wide range of career opportunities including assistance and support to those with personal, family, financial and community related problems. Graduates are qualified to work in Youth Welfare, Legal Guardianship, Patient/ Client Legal Representation, Parole, Out-of-Court Settlement, as well as in counselling and advocacy.<sup>30</sup>

### ***MA Studies in Youth Work and Community Work***

For the graduate studies, the UK is again the case that offers excellent study programmes.

***The Youth and Community Work MA of the University of East London*** is an 1 year programme that aims to provide graduates in relevant fields and with experience of working with young people and community groups, an opportunity to develop a deeper understanding of the field of youth and community at both the theoretical and the practical level; the programme leads to a Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) professional qualification in youth work; topics covered on the

<sup>29</sup> Humak University of Applied Sciences, Helsinki , Finland - Bachelor Youth Work and Social Equality, Available at:<<http://www.bachelorsportal.eu/studies/129330/youth-work-and-social-equality.html>>, last retrieved March 30, 2016.

<sup>30</sup> University of Applied Sciences Upper Austria, Linz, Austria , Available at: <<http://www.bachelorsportal.eu/studies/16254/social-work.html>>, last retrieved March 30, 2016.



programme are the theory, policy and practice of youth work, interpersonal communication and group work, accountability, professionalism and leadership; the programme also provides an overview of the theoretical, philosophical, and ethical principles which underpin research and introduces students to the theory and practice of practitioner research.<sup>31</sup>

**Youth and Community Work MA - Liverpool Hope University** offers an MA programme that is combining the skills development of innovative and reflective practitioners, who are able to engage and the development of positive relationships within communities, which lead to education and discovery. The programme had been designed on a participatory manner, having documented the process with the users of the service and reflects today's youth and community work agenda.<sup>32</sup>

**Youth and Community Work MA - University of Northampton** equips the graduates with the essential skills and competencies on responding to the new and emerging delivery arrangements and to the demands from practice. The taught programme delivery element is designed to take place on 1 single day per week so that the post-graduate students will use the other week days to continue in their current related employment or access applied practice opportunities.<sup>33</sup>

**Community and Youth Work MA - Durham University** has a learning programme that incorporates reflective professional approaches to informal education which enable the development of young people and communities. The approaches used in training integrate together with wider critical learning on shaping the wider social, political and organisational context in which such practice takes place. The programme combines academic study on taught modules, two periods of fieldwork practice and students conducting their own choice of research with support from experienced researchers.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> The Youth and Community Work MA of the University of East London, Available at: <<http://www.postgraduatesearch.com/university-of-east-london/52344334/postgraduate-course.htm>> , last retrieved March 30, 2016.

<sup>32</sup> Youth and Community Work MA - Liverpool Hope University, Available at: <<http://www.postgraduatesearch.com/liverpool-hope-university/55458614/postgraduate-course.htm>> , last retrieved March 30, 2016.

<sup>33</sup> Youth and Community Work MA - University of Northampton, Available at: <<http://www.postgraduatesearch.com/university-of-northampton/54483532/postgraduate-course.htm>> , last retrieved March 30 2016.

<sup>34</sup> Community and Youth Work MA - Durham University, Available at: <<http://www.postgraduatesearch.com/durham-university/54978496/postgraduate-course.htm>> , last retrieved April 2 2016.

Differently than for the UK, where the programmes would be designed to incorporate theories and practices of youth and community work, in the Netherlands, the MA programmes available are either in the area of social work or social pedagogy, with a well-defined dimension of youth studies.

**University of Groningen offers a M.Sc. Youth 0-21 Society and Policy** The students get to learn how youth research can be used to improve youth policies and practices, and how social and educational youth policies and interventions can help solve issues relating to the well-being of children, youngsters, their families and communities.<sup>35</sup> The teaching programme is based on combining pedagogical practices, research and youth work methodologies, offering the graduates both the opportunity to improve their working competencies in the youth field as well as to have a deeper understanding of the public policies and processes in the field of youth.

Both in the Scandinavian states and also in Western Europe, most of the MA programmes that would support youth workers in their professional development are either under pedagogy or social pedagogy studies or studies in social work, incorporating as well elements of youth policies' development. The development of the MA programmes for youth workers in the post-transition countries could be also shown through the **Master in Social Work with Youth and Children of Mykolas Romeris University** a joint study programme with joint study programme with Riga Stradins University, Latvia. The programme was designed so that it equips masters students with high personal and professional competence in social work that will be able to work in an intercultural level with children and youth, do research while analyzing children and youth social problems. Also, the graduates will be able to organize social work and provision of services, finding the most effective solutions to these problems, moreover – will be able to continually reflect on, evaluate their professional activities and provide these opportunities for performance improvement. During the study period, 2 weeks of intensive full-time learning are planned per semester: in Lithuania (1st and 3rd semesters) and Latvia (2nd semester). Between sessions, studies are planned online in the distance learning environment.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>35</sup> University of Groningen, M.Sc. Youth and 0-21 Society and Policy, Available at: <<http://www.rug.nl/masters/youth-0-21-society-and-policy/>>, last retrieved April 2 2016.

<sup>36</sup> Master in Social Work with Youth and Children of Mykolas Romeris University, Available at: <<http://www.masterstudies.com/Master-in-Social-Work-with-Youth-and-Children/Lithuania/MRU-Mykolas-Romeris/>>, last retrieved April 2 2016.

## M.A. European Youth Studies (M.A. EYS)

The M.A. European Youth Studies (M.A. EYS) was announced to be fully accredited and genuinely transnational and intercultural higher education 120 ECTS postgraduate qualification in interdisciplinary European youth studies, thereby filling an education and qualification gap at national and European levels. Having in mind the structure of the consortium, the programme was designed as the anchor for the convergence and consolidation of structured dialogue between research, policy and practice and to contribute to the development of policy-relevant research, evidence-based policymaking and informed, reflective practice. Piloted in 2011 with a short term course, the MA had an impressive network of partners including the European Commission/Council of Europe Youth Partnership, the European Youth Centers run by the Council of Europe's Youth Department, the European Youth Forum, ISA's Research Committee 34 (Sociology of Youth) and ESA's Research Network Youth and Generation. The 'Short Course' was supported by the Youth Partnership. The Short Course took place in 2011 and it involved 30 participants - youth workers, researchers and policy makers. In this course the curriculum content and methods of the future M.A. EYS. But in 2016, there is no clear evidence that the exemplary developed programme be implemented as designed - as a 2 years long study programme.<sup>37</sup>

In Greece, there is an absence of specialized studies for youth and youth work as there exist some programmes that include courses on youth work but only as part of social work studies. In that sense the **Technological Educational Institute of Athens** is offering a **BA and an Msc in Social Work**. The **Technological Educational Institute of Crete** offer a **BA in Social Work** and the **Democritus University of Thrace** offers an **Msc in Social Policy and Social Work**.

Similarly to Greece, in Cyprus, there aren't any professional studies focused entirely on youth work which is included in social work programmes offered by public and private institutions.

**BA degrees in Social Work** are offered by the **European University Cyprus, University of Nicosia and Frederick University**.

**Open University of Cyprus** offers, together with 3 European universities, an international joint degree, **IMAESC in Adult Education for Social Change**.

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<sup>37</sup>M.A. European Youth Studies (M.A. EYS), Available at: < <http://www.youthstudies.eu/course/> > , last retrieved April 5, 2016.

## Conclusions

The paper aimed at mapping out the BA and MA programmes that would offer youth workers the opportunity to have a degree diploma in their field of work. The results of the documentation are showing that the degree programmes had an evolution perfectly in line with the development of the youth work profession. The model of excellence is the UK model where a wide range of BA programmes being both accredited by NYA and combining theory and practice, are well tailored to the needs of youth. In the Western Europe and in the Scandinavian states, youth work formation is being mainly offered by the social work and the social policies department or combined with the social pedagogy. As for the post-transition states, the BA and MA programmes are on the same stage of development as the profession per se. The M.A. in European Youth Studies (M.A. EYS) is definitely an initiative that could contribute to the development of the profession at the European level and would invest in the competencies development of the youth workers able then to engage in the dialogue and policy development mechanisms with the policy makers.

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