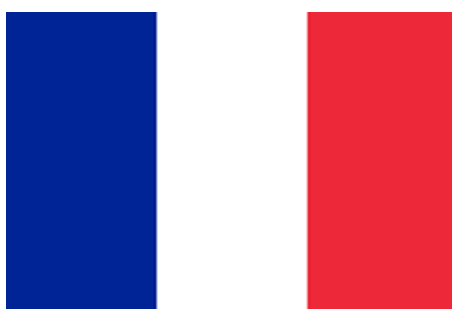


## Youth Partnership

Partnership between the European Commission  
and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth



# Country sheet on youth work in France



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## 1. Strategic and legislative framework of youth work in the country

In France, "youth work" does not have just one single definition and is not governed by a single law. It refers to different realities and professional practices. However, it is most often associated to the field of socio-cultural/educational activities (*animation socio-culturelle/éducative*).

Socio-cultural activities can be aimed at all audiences: adults, the elderly and young people. However, most of the co-ordinators of such activities work with children, particularly in the out-of-school activities for minors (*Accueil Collectif de Mineurs/ACM*), organised outside school time (holidays, leisure time) and regulated by the state.

In this case, these activities are both social work and educational, they are part of the policy of childhood and youth, which refers to the European concept of "youth work". In France, moreover, socio-cultural activities, especially for youth, are closely associated with popular education (*éducation populaire*).

### Popular education at the heart of the principles of socio-cultural activities

Socio-cultural activities (youth work) have been shaped in part by popular education, a pedagogical movement which has developed since the beginning of the 20th century that promotes the experience of citizenship, the emancipation of people through education, the development of critical thinking and the democratisation of culture and knowledge. This movement has partly defined the principles and values of socio-cultural activities, also promoting the principles of autonomy, emancipation and self-construction.

### The legislative framework

If socio-cultural activities do not have a single legislative definition, the function and activity of socio-cultural activities co-ordinators relies upon an important legislative arsenal (decrees, circulars, etc.). The state also imposes norms and legislative regulations with regard to [the out-of-school leisure activities for minors](#) (leisure centres, holiday camps) where youth work takes place. These laws include protecting minors and imposing supervisory standards. The Ministry in charge of the youth and more precisely its Directorate for youth, non-formal education and voluntary organisations are in charge of developing the laws concerning the diplomas relating to these activities and the rules on the supervision of minors.

Legislative texts on youth work (*animation*) (non-exhaustive list)

[Code of social action and families](#), especially articles L.227-4 to L.227-12 and R.227-1, R.227-12 and R.227-14 on minors hosted outside the family home

[Order of 9 February 2007](#) setting out the titles and diplomas to exercise the functions of youth work and co-ordination in holiday camps, activities without accommodation and in scouting activities

[Order of 22 June 2007](#) laying down the procedures for organising certificates of qualification for the functions of co-ordinator (*animateur*) and director in activities for minors

[Order of 15 July 2015](#) on certificates of qualification for the functions of co-ordinator and director in activities for minors

### **Target groups**

Youth work is aimed at all young people, both children and young adults (up to 25 years old), although the activities offered by the youth workers differ according to the public. In the case of minors, activities are most often extracurricular and their role is to open the youngest to culture, arts, sciences and sports as well as to participate in their mental development.

The activities aimed at adolescents and young adults also meet objectives of cultural openness, but they must also support young people towards autonomy or even help them when they face social difficulties. Whether it is youth work for children or youth, the place and role attributed to the family in the education and support of children and young people is essential.

### **Young people with difficulties**

Specialised educators (*éducateurs spécialisés*) are also professionals in the field of youth work except that they work more specifically with children and adolescents with disabilities, behavioural problems or social integration difficulties. Their intervention is as much in the field of disability, child protection, social work and professional integration as the prevention of juvenile delinquency. There are 62 000 specialised educators who work in the fields of social or medical-social action. They are mainly employed by NGOs, but also local authorities.

(Source: [Educateur spécialisé](#), Direction Générale de la Cohésion sociale)

## 2. Funding youth work

Youth work is financed in part by the state's public finance programme "[youth and associative life](#)" which includes a portion of the funds allocated to youth, popular education and voluntary organisations. This programme finances three actions:

1. "Development of voluntary organisations"
2. "Actions in favour of youth and popular education"
3. "Development of civic service".

Some of the credits for the action "in favour of youth and popular education" are attributed to access to leisure activities and the development of holiday camps and leisure activities, particularly in the context of educational policies developed by local authorities. The (state) budget for the action amounts to nearly €70 million.

To this budget should be added the out-of-state financing of institutional actors such as the [National Family Allowances Fund](#), which contributes to the development of diversified leisure activities and extracurricular activities for minors (from 3 to 17 years old) by subsidising associations and social centres in particular through family allowance funds.

In addition, local and regional authorities occupy a major place in the financing of youth work, particularly through the funding of structures, including the out-of-school activities for minors and the employment of the co-ordinators of these activities. For example, municipalities create and manage sports and cultural facilities. They also subsidise structures that implement sports and cultural activities.

In order to facilitate access to training courses preparing for [BAFA](#), some organisations offer financial assistance ([family allowance funds](#), regional councils, employment centres, etc.). With regard to the funding of professional diploma courses, local authorities (particularly the Regions) are the main funders of socio-cultural activities training.

Sources : [PLF 2018 - extrait du bleu budgétaire de la mission : sport, jeunesse et vie associative](#)

<http://www.vie-publique.fr/>

### 3. Forms and examples of youth work in your country

#### The practice

Youth workers can be employed by the private non-profit sector and in the public service. In recent years, local development associations and childcare institutions have become increasingly important in this branch. Youth workers mainly work in the out-of-school activities for minors, which constitutes one of the most common forms of youth work. The organisers of these activities are essentially non-profit associations and also local authorities (mainly town halls).

Out-of-school activities for minors:

- are organised during holidays and leisure time (extracurricular time, Wednesdays, etc.);
- are regulated by the state and in particular must be declared to the administration;
- offer the opportunity to practise several educational leisure activities organised from an educational project specific to each organiser and a pedagogical project specific to each management team.

Local authorities, especially municipalities and associations of communes, employ their workers to work not only with children and adolescents in extracurricular periods and during holidays, but also with the elderly. They recruit either directly or through structures such as the municipal centres of social action (CCAS), etc.

Activity co-ordinators can also work in the private non-profit sector: youth centres, social centres, young workers' homes, social establishments, leisure clubs. It is impossible to list the youth work projects set up especially by the municipalities or associations and social structures as they are multiple and concern a variety of themes: culture, sport, citizenship, living together, the digital environment, the environment, food, etc.

#### The tools

At the national level, the [Ministry in charge of youth](#) and its decentralised services develop practical guides with tools and practical cases intended for the youth workers and directors of structures.

We can give the example of the guide developed by the Prefecture of the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes Region on the fight against discrimination: [Leisure and animation without discrimination. Practical Guide](#).

In addition, magazines specialising in youth work, such [as the Journal of animation](#), also offer practical sheets with concrete examples of activities.

The training centres also offer many online tools such [as examples of activities](#) or educational projects.

In addition, the Ministry in charge of youth has created an [app dedicated to BAFA](#) that provides access to information on youth work, learning about training courses at BAFA/BAFD and managing registration for training.

## 4. Structures, actors and levels in youth work provision

### 4.1 State structures deciding on or providing youth work

#### Ministry in charge of youth and its territorial directorates

The Ministry in charge of youth, through its Directorate for youth, non-formal education and voluntary organisations, imposes a regulatory framework in the field of youth work. It establishes the conditions of access to the functions of youth work and director, elaborates the regulatory framework of the out-of-school activities for minors and ensures its implementation, notably by carrying out controls and evaluations. The mission of the Ministry in charge of youth is to ensure the protection of minors hosted in structures (recreation centres without accommodation or with accommodation, also called summer camps) and to promote quality youth work.

It is the directorates of the Ministry in charge of youth present within the territories which can carry out checks on these reception centres at any time. They also have an advisory role to the organisers and the management team of the collective reception of minors.

#### Ministry of Sports

The Ministry of sports in collaboration with the Ministry in charge of youth and their decentralised services, also trains and issues state vocational diplomas for socio-cultural and sports activities.

#### Local authorities

Local authorities play a prominent role in youth work since it is mainly the municipalities that implement the out-of-school activities for minors where the youth work takes place and recruit the staff (directors, youth workers). In addition, they are also responsible for developing educational projects. They also co-finance a large number of socio-educational structures, such as social centres, youth and cultural structures, and so on.

As part of the implementation of out-of-school activities for minors, local authorities are in touch with the decentralised services of the Ministry in charge of youth.

### 4.2 National or local youth councils

Local youth councils do not play a particular role in the implementation of the animation.

### 4.3 Youth and youth work NGOs

The associations play a key role in the development of youth work: they can recruit youth workers to organise collective receptions of minors but also to offer socio-educational actions throughout the year to the population of their districts. Some associations or structures of popular education also train those who will work in the field of youth work. These associations, which also serve as training centres, are accredited as "centres for youth and popular education" (JEP) by the ministry in charge of youth. Young people can find the [list of organisations](#) authorised to prepare youth work diplomas on the [institutional website of the Ministry in charge of youth](#).

#### 4.4 Other relevant actors

Out-of-school activities for minors can be organised by private companies or individuals while respecting the regulatory and legislative framework. This situation is, however, not the most common in France.



## 5. Recognition

### Youth work, a professional sector

Youth work is a professional sector but it is not "unified" (R. Cortesero, 2012, [Popular Education and Animation, INJEP](#)), bringing together different and unequally recognised professional statuses.

Various trainings prepare people for youth work and its different professions. Some train for non-professional degrees which do allow people to work for short periods (holidays) and to acquire a professional initiation. These trainings are supervised and managed by the ministry in charge of youth.

### Non-professional patents

The Trainer's Qualification Certificate (Brevet d'aptitude aux fonctions d'animateur - BAFA)

No degree is required to prepare for the BAFA. The training sessions are authorised from the age of 17 and are implemented by associations. It is a non-professional diploma that permits the supervision of young people in holiday and leisure centres.

The Director's Qualification Certificate (Brevet d'aptitude aux fonctions de directeur - BAFD)

This certificate is intended for holders of the BAFA. It allows the supervision of children and teenagers and provides the skills to run a holiday and leisure centre with a team. It is accessible from age 21 for BAFA holders.

General texts

[Decree No. 2015-872 of 15 July 2015 on certificates of qualification for the functions of animator and director in collective reception of minors](#)

[Order of 15 July 2015 on certificates of qualification for the functions of animator and director in collective receptions of minors](#)

Some degrees in youth work have a professional vocation.

### Professional certificates of youth work

First, there is the professional aptitude certificate of Assistant Technician Animator of Youth and Sports (*Le brevet d'aptitude professionnelle d'assistant animateur technicien de la Jeunesse et des Sports - BAPAAT*).

This certificate is the first level of qualification for the youth work and framing of sports and socio-cultural activities. It is accessible from 16 years old without condition of diploma. The candidate is expected to have experience and professional practice in youth work.

General texts

[Art. R.212-1 to R.212-10 of the Sport code](#)

Another certificate is the Professional Certificate of Youth, Popular Education and Sport (*Le Brevet professionnel de la jeunesse, de l'éducation populaire et du sport - BPJEPS*). The BPJEPS is a Level IV professional diploma accessible from the age of 18 and those obtaining it can then carry out an educational or social activity in the sports, socio-educational or cultural field. The BPJEPS has two specialities: youth worker and sport trainer.

General texts

[The Conseil d'Etat decree No. 2015-1527 of 24 November 2015](#)

This decree is completed by [the framework decree of 21 December 2015](#).

Another one is the Higher State Diploma in Youth, Popular Education (*Diplôme d'Etat supérieur de la jeunesse, de l'éducation populaire - DE(S)JEPS*)

Those wishing to run socio-cultural centres or co-ordinate projects can take training courses for being directors, including the Higher State Diploma in Youth and Popular Education. Preparation for this diploma is provided by public or private training centres authorised by the regional directorates for youth.

General text: [Decree in Council of State No. 2015-1527 of 24 November 2015](#) on the professional certificate, the state diploma and the higher state diploma of youth, popular education and sport.

#### **European programmes and youth work**

The youth workers benefit from European programmes that support youth work, in particular key [action 1 of the Erasmus +](#) programme, which promote the mobility of youth workers for education and training purposes and enable meetings and exchanges of practice among youth actors.

## 6. Quality standards

### The role of the youth worker

It is, in part, the youth work diplomas developed by the state that define the skills and expectations of a youth worker.

According to [the decree of 15 July 2015](#) relating to certificates of aptitude to the functions of youth worker and director in out-of-school activities for minors, the youth worker must conceive, propose and implement personalised activities after having defined the needs and expectations of young people with whom they work.

More concretely, the youth worker is expected to know how:

- to ensure the physical and moral security of minors, and in particular, make them aware, as part of the implementation of an educational project, of the risks associated with addictive behaviour;
- to encourage and animate daily life and activities;
- to participate in welcoming, communicating and developing relations between the different actors;
- to participate, within a team, in the implementation of a pedagogical project in coherence with the educational project in the respect of the regulatory framework of out-of-school activities for minors;
- to accompany the minors in the realisation of their projects.

In addition, their mission has also a citizenship dimension because they must also:

- transmit and share the values of the Republic, including secularism;
- build a quality relationship with members of the co-ordination team and minors, whether individual or collective, and to ensure in particular prevention of any form of discrimination;
- provide, where appropriate, an appropriate response to situations faced by minors.

In addition, they organise their activity around "projects" whose principles are set by [article R227-23 of the Code on Social Action and Families. Guides](#) to help develop "educational projects", prepared by the ministry in charge of youth, are offered to the youth workers.

### The educational project

The educational project "defines the objectives of the educational action of the people who run the holiday and leisure centre and specifies the measures taken by the legal person organising the reception" (Article R.227-624 of the Code on Social Action and Families).

The director implements this educational project and writes with their team a pedagogical project in which they must specify the activities developed for young people. It is expected that the organisers of the out-of-school activities for minors will communicate to the parents and to the decentralised directorate of the ministry in charge of the youth, their educational project.

### Youth worker training

The training allows the acquisition of the skills and knowledge necessary for the professions of youth worker. Only training organisations that have been accredited by the ministry in charge of youth can organise all the training sessions leading to the issue of diplomas.

These organisations offer training but also many professional tools (guides, examples of educational projects, educational journals ...) to put in place a qualitative work.

### **Control and evaluation**

The work of the youth workers is subject to various controls. It is evaluated in particular by their direct supervisors (the director of the out-of-school activities for minors) but can also be controlled by the services of the ministry in charge of youth, which has the role of controlling the quality of the educational offer in the out-of-school activities for minors but also to ensure the protection and safety of the minors involved.

## 7. Knowledge and data on youth work

### Existing resources

Resources on youth work are diverse and exhaustive and are not elaborated by the same institution. These data are produced by public institutions such as [INSEE](#) (National institute of statistics) which produces reports on the characteristics of youth work in certain French regions and INJEP (National institute for youth policies) but also by youth work training structures or academic institutions.

These resources address broad themes covering the whole field of youth work, the historical changes of this professional sector, the activities and professions of socio-cultural activities, the profiles of the workers (genres, social backgrounds ...) etc. In addition, the Directorate for Youth, Non-formal Education and Voluntary Organisation has an information system on the diplomas that allows it to collect data.

### Sources : Indicative bibliography and websites

- Mignon Jean-Marie (2012), *Les métiers de l'animation. Environnement et métiers. Formations et outils. Législation*, Paris, Dunod.
- Lebon F. (2007), *Les animateurs socioculturels et de loisirs : morphologie d'un groupe professionnel (1982-2005)*, Marly Le Roi, Institut national de la jeunesse et de l'éducation populaire.
- Lebon F. (2009), *Les animateurs socioculturels*, Paris, La Découverte.
- Patricia Loncle, [Youth work and youth policy in France](#).
- Régis Cortesero, *Éducation populaire et animation*, INJEP, December 2012.
- Rapport sur la filière animation, Rapporteur : Monsieur Jésus DE CARLOS - Séance Plénière du 18 mai 2016. Conseil supérieur de la fonction publique territoriale – Ministère de l'Intérieur.
- On popular education: <http://www.injep.fr/article/leducation-populaire-aujourd'hui-octobre-2017-11778.html>.
- On youth work degrees: <http://www.sports.gouv.fr/organisation/publication-chiffres-cles/Statistiques/STAT-INFO/article/Diplomes>.
- [Les diplômes professionnels délivrés par le Ministère de la ville, de la jeunesse et des Sports de 2005 à 2013](#).

### Data on the sector

The data indicating the number of young beneficiaries of youth work is not available and seem difficult to obtain since the youth workers can work for local authorities, associations and private structures.

Only the data on the out-of-school activities for minors (regulated by the state) is accessible. The Ministry in charge of youth, which regulates and controls the activities of these activities, obliges the organisers of these structures to declare with the administrative authorities the identity of the organisers, the nature of these activities, the periods of activity, the identity of youth workers and their qualifications, as well as the number of places open to minors by age group. These data are centralised in the Information System for the out-of-school activities for minors (*SIAM*).

This information system makes it possible to have information on the out-of-school activities for minors, to analyse their evolution but also their distribution in the territory. The National Institute for Youth and Non-Formal Education (INJEP), which relies on data from the *SIAM*, estimates that 2.6 million places were open to minors under 12 years of age on extracurricular time during the year 2015-2016. According to SIAM data, the out-of-school activities for minors mainly involve minors under 12 years of age.

### **Youth workers: figures**

BAFA and BAFD (Non-professional diplomas)

According to the Ministry in charge of youth, which is responsible for the youth work diplomas, in 2016 [54 600](#) people graduated from the BAFA and 1 900 from BAFD.

Between 2011 and 2016, 70% of BAFA and BAFD graduates were women. In addition, youth work attracts a young audience as demonstrated by the median age of BAFA graduates, which during this period was 19.5 years. The BAFD graduates are older, with a median age of over 31 in 2016.

### **Professional diplomas of youth work**

The Ministry in charge of youth has issued 18 875 professional diplomas in the fields of sport and youth work, of which 13 682 (73%) were professional sports diplomas, 4 203 (22%) were professional diplomas in socio-cultural activities, and 990 were complementary additional qualifications to already acquired diplomas.

There is no information system that allows us to know the number of volunteer animators.

Sources:

[Les diplômes professionnels délivrés par le Ministère de la ville, de la jeunesse et des Sports de 2005 à 2013](#)

[Tableaux statistiques relatifs aux diplômés du BAFA et du BAFD en 2016 de l'INJEP](#)

### **Current debates and open questions/discussions around youth work in your country**

Due to its evolution but also to the demand of public authorities and families in socio-cultural activities, the youth work sector is confronted with new challenges but also new difficulties that affect the professional practices of youth workers, including the widening and increasing complexity of their social and educational intervention, as well as the lack of recognition and appreciation of their actions and professions.

The difficulty of making visible its action is presented as major for the youth work who works with an audience on a project but the effects of the action in terms of human impacts and effects on the institution are not quantifiable and, as such, are not often valued. Moreover, youth work professionals find it difficult to have their profession recognised in the non-traditional professional spheres of youth work that disregard youth work as it is voluntary work. Finally, it is also necessary to add the precariousness of the employment conditions of the youth workers, especially those who do not have professional diplomas, and especially because in this field we can find a majority of jobs with low wages or part-time.

## **8. European and international dimension of youth work in the country**

In addition to access to the Erasmus + programme, French youth workers graduating [from BAFA or BAFD](#) may benefit from training or experience abroad offered by youth work training centres. These training structures offer "deepening" of BAFA and BAFD abroad which also aim to "facilitate a stay abroad" and in particular to manage the intercultural dimension.

For example, the Franco-German Office offers the "BAFA-JuLeiCa" training programme to become a youth worker, sanctioned at the same time by BAFA and its German equivalent, the Jugendleiter/In-Card. This training is in accordance with the regulations in force in both countries and allows people to obtain a double certification.