

Youth Partnership

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



COUNTRY SHEET ***ON YOUTH WORK*** ***IN LIECHTENSTEIN***



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1. Context of youth work

Until the early 1970s, the Roman Catholic Church offered youth work, separated by gender. Then the church youth groups broke up or changed to youth groups which were open to all young people. These youth groups formed an association to obtain state funding for joint projects. In the context of open youth work in the 1990s, professionally managed youth clubs were established in all municipalities, and the youth groups were dissolved.

In December 1999 the youth information centre “aha – Tips and information for young people” (“aha – Tipps & Infos für junge Leute”) was opened. “aha” offers youth leader workshops and initiates or counsels youth projects. It also operates the national agency for Erasmus+ Youth in Action and Eurodesk. The youth information centre has been entrusted with running Liechtenstein’s Youth in Action programme since 2000. The priority targets for support are projects dealing with the issues of European citizenship, young people’s participation in democratic life and cultural diversity.

In the years 2009 and 2010 open youth work in Liechtenstein was analysed (Analysis of Youth Work in the Principality of Liechtenstein 2009/2010 /Analyse der Offenen Jugendarbeit im Fürstentum Liechtenstein 2009/2010). On the basis of this analysis 10 out of 11 municipalities of Liechtenstein established the Youth Work Foundation (OJA: Offene Jugendarbeit Liechtenstein) in 2014.

OJA is in charge of professional open youth work but there are also other types of youth work in Liechtenstein, for example:

- Youth work in the frame of associations: the Scouts, cultural and sport organisations, etc.
- Youth work in secondary schools: school social work (www.schulsozialarbeit.li).
- International project-related youth work: Association of European Youth Accompaniers (EJL: Europäische Jugendbegleiter Liechtenstein – www.jugendbegleiter.li).

2. Strategic and legislative framework of youth work

In 1996, Liechtenstein ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The Youth Act of 1979 was revised several times (1985, 1995, 2002 and 2005) and replaced in 2009 by the new Child and Youth Act (Kinder- und Jugendgesetz, KJG; LGBl. 2009 No. 29).

Within this framework fundamental rights have been implemented, as laid down in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, such as the right of participation at all levels (Article 3d, Articles 87/88).

Articles 87 and 88 obliges the nation and the municipalities to ensure and develop adequate possibilities and procedures for children and young people to participate at all levels in society – also in decision-making processes.

The guidelines for governmental support and funding of youth work, valid since 1995, have also been revised on the basis of the new Child and Youth Act. The new guidelines are laid down in the Ordinance on the allocation of contributions to the child and youth promotion 2009 (Verordnung über die Ausrichtung von Beiträgen im Rahmen der Kinder- und Jugendförderung, KJFBV; LGBl. 2009 No. 243).

There is no defined target group for youth work concerning age. But mainly targeted are children and young people up to the age of 25 years. Liechtenstein has 37 800 inhabitants; the shares of age groups are as follows: under 15 years: 14.9%; 15-29 years: 17.7%; 30-49 years: 28.7%; 50-64 years: 22.2%, 65 years and older: 16.5%.

Since 2014 the youth work of the municipalities has merged with the Youth Work Foundation Liechtenstein (OJA: Offene Jugendarbeit Liechtenstein). The OJA employs 18 professional youth workers. It is the successor of the former umbrella organisation VLJ (association of youth organisations), which was an open network without budget. The OJA enables the co-ordination of youth work on a large scale. Synergies can be exploited and joint projects launched. The former youth magazine “flash” was replaced by “OJA-flash”.

The Youth Work Foundation OJA defines “youth work” in its framework with the following eight guidelines:

Youth work encourages:

- encounter and social competence;
- equal opportunity and integration;
- voluntary commitment, own initiative and personal responsibility;
promotes health and physical activity;
- accompanies young people on their way to an independent life;
- offers free rooms to young people;
- promotes youth culture;
- promotes informal education.

3. Recognition

Youth work is regarded as valuable and enjoys high appreciation.

Liechtenstein has no institution that offers education for youth workers. Due to various agreements and treaties, students from Liechtenstein can enrol in universities and similar institutions in Switzerland and Austria. For employment as a youth worker in Liechtenstein a certificate, for example in social work from an educational institution in Switzerland or Austria, is required. Therefore, the basic education for youth workers recognised in Switzerland and Austria is also recognised in Liechtenstein.

The Youth Work Foundation keeps a register of professional youth workers and conducts training seminars, which are obligatory for its youth workers. Further education in Switzerland and Austria is open for youth workers in Liechtenstein (individual and voluntary training).

Since 1979 Liechtenstein has implemented the support programme Jugend + Sport. This programme enables training and education for people working in sport organisations with young people: www.llv.li/#/11914

The Scouts (Pfadfinder Liechtensteins) are implementing their own courses, which are recognised: www.pfadi.li/ausbildung/kurse

Under Erasmus+ Youth in Action youth workers and youth leaders can participate in trainings. Youthpass is the recognition tool for Erasmus+.

4. Funding youth work

The national budgetary allocation for youth work amounts to about 870 000 Swiss francs (CHF). This sum is composed of financial contributions to the youth information centre “aha - Tips and information for young people”, the Scouts, JUBEL (youth participation in Liechtenstein), Eurodesk, the national agency of Erasmus+ (for administrative expenses), and to financial support for projects, youth exchange, training seminars, youth camps, etc.

The Youth Work Foundation receives annually CHF 1 300 000 from the municipalities. The additional expenses for building and maintenance are paid by each municipality itself.

The funding of Erasmus+ for youth projects is very important and amounts to €557 000. The contribution to the administrative costs of the national agency amounts to around €55 000.

5. Structures, actors and levels in youth work provision

5.1. State structures/public authorities deciding on or providing youth work

Ministry in charge of youth: Ministry for Social Affairs (www.regierung.li)

Office: The division Youth Services is integrated into the Office of Social Services and operates in the function as a Children and Youth office. It supervises the national agency “aha – Tips and Information for young people”, which is responsible for the initiatives for young people in the framework of Erasmus+ of the European Commission (www.asd.llv.li).

Advisory body to the Ministry: Child and Youth Advisory Council. It represents the interests of children and young people and advises the government on all issues concerning youth policy (www.kjub.li).

In addition, each of the 11 municipalities has a youth commission. They are counselling the community in youth affairs, especially regarding the development of provisions for young people.

Ombudsperson for children’s and youth rights: The independent Ombudsperson for children’s and youth rights was implemented in 2009 and integrated into the newly created association for human rights in 2017 (www.oskj.li).

5.2. National or local youth councils

JUBEL (JUgendBEeteiligung Liechtenstein /youth participation in Liechtenstein) has offered a platform since 2007 for youth participation. The programme aims to encourage the social commitment of young people in Liechtenstein. Around 80 school class speakers between 12 and 16 years old take the opportunity to gather in a youth forum. They discuss their wishes and needs, collect ideas, meet politicians and experts who support them in the implementation of their projects’ ideas. They realise their projects with the help of their schoolmates. JUBEL enables young people to learn how democracy works and how they can take part to the decision-making processes (www.jubel.li).

5.3. Youth and youth work NGOs

Youth information in Liechtenstein: youth information centre “aha – Tips and information for young people”. “aha” offers youth leader workshops and initiates or counsels youth projects. It operates the national agency for Erasmus+ Youth in Action and is also responsible for Eurodesk and JUBEL (www.aha.li).

Youth Work Foundation Liechtenstein (OJA; Offene Jugendarbeit Liechtenstein): The Youth Work Foundation was established in 2014. It offers services for young people in youth clubs and “in the field” of the municipalities mainly in the form of leisure time provision. The aim is to develop broad services for young people and secure the quality of youth work. In all of the 11 municipalities in Liechtenstein there is a youth centre/youth club for young people, staffed by the professional youth workers of the Youth Work

Foundation. The youth workers together with young people create the various issues of the youth magazine “OJA-flash” (www.oja.li).

The Scouts: There is only one nationally and internationally organised youth association as such: the Scouts. About 10% of Liechtenstein’s youth is a member of the Scouts (www.pfadi.li).

Youth Parliament Association (Verein Jugendrat in Liechtenstein): The Youth Parliament Association was founded in 2012 as a new opportunity for political participation for young people and young adults (www.jugendrat.li).

International project-related youth work: The Association of European Youth Accompaniers (EJL: Europäische Jugendbegleiter) was founded in 2003. The purpose of the EJL is to promote understanding among young people in Europe (www.jugendbegleiter.li).

5.4. Other relevant actors

Minister of Sport

Minister of Cultural Affairs

Sport Unit

Office of Cultural Affairs

Sports clubs/cultural associations: Liechtenstein has about 400 sports clubs and cultural associations. Most of them have either youth divisions or accept children and youngsters as members.

6. Forms and examples of youth work in your country

The state encourages especially the national pupils’ parliament JUBEL (youth participation in Liechtenstein) and the youth projects competition (Jugendprojektwettbewerb). The state supports these projects in order to promote the participation of young people and to involve them in decision-making processes. In addition, volunteers are financially supported, for example for the implementation of youth camps.

The youth information centre “aha – Tips and information for young people” offers low-level counselling and assistance to young people in carrying out projects.

The Youth Work Foundation is the main provider of open youth work in Liechtenstein. On the basis of an individual contract with the municipalities, the Youth Work Foundation offers tailor-made services in the field of open youth work and outreach youth work. The youth work is mainly youth centre-based, with a small share of outreach youth work.

The division Youth Services within the Office of Social Services provides services in the field of youth support, for example financial support for youth organisations, youth groups, projects in the youth field, for youth leader training, etc. It also conducts projects to prevent risk behaviour or drug-related

behaviour (for more information see www.asd.llv.li, www.jugendschutz.li, www.gewaltschutz.li, www.duseschtwia.li).

The association for assisted living (Verein für Betreutes Wohnen) with its socio-pedagogical youth living group (www.vbw.li/sozialpaedagogische-jugendwohnggruppe/) cares for young people in difficult situations.

Time-out School (www.timeoutschule.li): The Time-out School is to be seen as a school variant, which should give children and young people the chance to be supported, guided and stabilised by extended care and counselling structures. This is an intervention option for difficult situations, which includes social or special educational measures that are intended to enable a child or adolescent to be reintegrated into the original classroom.

Erasmus+ Youth in Action in Liechtenstein gives priority to inclusion projects, for example inclusion of young people with special needs (in co-operation with the Special Education Centre – HPZ; Heilpädagogisches Zentrum, www.hpz.li).

Examples of digital/online youth work are: JAPP, an offer provided the OJA (www.japp.li); Newsflash (via Whatsapp) and online Youthletter, both from “aha” (www.aha.li/kollektionen/startseite/sub-top-artikel/newsflash/ / www.aha.li/ueber-aha/aha-youthletter).

7. Quality standards

The Youth Work Foundation provides youth work tailored to each municipality on the basis of service contracts. The contracts also include the quality standards to be met. In the sense of a quality control the Youth Work Foundation submits annual reports and financial statements to the board of trustees and to the municipalities.

The youth information centre “aha”, which operates the national agency for Erasmus+ Youth in Action, has a performance agreement with the Office of Social Services. This agreement is currently under revision. The Office of Social Services as national authority for Erasmus+ Youth in Action operates a yearly system audit from the national agency.

The national agency has been a member of RAY since 2010. The RAY Network is an open, growing and self-governed European research network of national agencies of the Erasmus+ Youth in Action programme and their research partners. The main aim of RAY is to contribute to a better understanding of international youth work and youth learning mobility and thus to an evidence-based policy development in the youth field in Europe as well as to the development of international youth work and learning mobility practice. Thanks to RAY monitoring surveys and their analysis there are some figures and research results for a systematic evaluation of the programme implementation in Liechtenstein.

8. Knowledge and data on youth work

The youth work was analysed in 2009/10. Based on the results of the study, the Youth Work Foundation OJA was set up by 10 out of 11 municipalities in 2014. The OJA employs 18 youth workers; the municipality Mauren employs one youth worker. The experience with this organisational merger of the former youth work of the municipalities into a nationwide organisation is very positive.

The OJA documents its work in an annual report, submitted to the Board of Trustees and to the municipalities. The annual report shows an overview of the projects, of the number of participants and the proper use of the funds.

The youth information centre “aha – Tips and information for young people” employs five youth workers. The state subsidises “aha”, and the EU is largely co-financing youth programmes. An evaluation of these programmes was carried out in autumn 2017.

9. European and international dimension of youth work in the country

The Erasmus+ programme offers a wide range of possibilities for young people and for youth workers.

The International Lake Constance Conference (IBK: Internationale Bodenseekonferenz, www.bodenseekonferenz.org) conducts the project “xchange”: Five countries – Germany, Switzerland, Austria, Italy and Liechtenstein – are participating in the international exchange programme. Apprentices can complete four weeks of their in-company training at a company in another country within the framework of xchange.

The Platform Network (www.platform-network.com) is an informal network for co-operation within the youth sector between regions, municipalities and countries in Europe, and was initiated in Luxembourg in 1986. Since then the Platform Network has every year been facilitating youth activities to fulfil the aims of youth mobility and the exchange of experiences. The youth information centre “aha” is a member of the Platform Network.

There are three “aha” organisations: in Ravensburg (Germany), Vorarlberg (Austria), and Liechtenstein. All “ahas” have regular meetings and common projects.

10. Current debates and open questions/policies on youth work

Youth policy in Liechtenstein is currently concerned primarily with educational opportunities, the permeability of the education system, improvement of vocational training and the political participation of young people.

Youth work also takes place in secondary schools with so-called school social work (www.schulsozialarbeit.li). The employees of school social work in Liechtenstein accompany classes and groups on topics in the field of social work, social education and sociocultural animation. Due to the strong interdisciplinary co-operation with other specialist bodies, there is a high level of expertise on topics as well as legislation in Liechtenstein.

Open questions and debates concern, above all, the difficulty of motivating young people aged between 13 and 18 to participate in youth projects. Young people of this age are strongly challenged by puberty, career choice and the use of new media. The inclusion of children under the age of 13 is also discussed. This requires the sensitisation of teachers, parents and political leaders. International youth work is also still capable of development.