

Perspective on Youth Work Developments

FINLAND FACT SHEET

The 3rd European Youth Work Convention (EYWC) plays a key role in launching the implementation of the European Youth Work Agenda (EYWA) as a strategic framework for further developing and strengthening youth work practice and policies in Europe. The goal of this fact sheet is to provide basic information about the perspective on youth work developments in a specific country. All information has been gathered from national contact points, reports or country sheets and profiles available online. The purpose of this fact sheet is to stimulate discussion before, at and after the 3rd EYWC among the members of the national delegations. This information is a suggestion only and a starting point for further development by the delegation when planning actions for implementation of the EYWA.

FACTS

Youth work as a recognised occupation: YES

Legislative framework for youth work: YES

Main youth work actors: municipalities, NGOs, parishes, Ministry of Education and Culture

Highlights with regard to youth work development:

- A formal education system for youth work, which combines vocational education, tertiary education on both sectors on the dual sector model (universities of applied sciences and the more academically oriented universities);
- The well-established financing and policy system for managing youth work both on the state level and on the local level based on legislation.

STRENGTHS & SUCCESSES	CHALLENGES
<p>Strong political support to youth work: the National youth work and youth policy programme is a statutory programme adopted as a Government resolution every four years. In the programme, the Government defines its youth policy objectives, but also sets out the policies for youth work.</p> <p>Networked community of practice which combines youth workers, youth organisations, policy-makers, administration and researchers.</p> <p>Strong role of municipalities and the state. Youth work in Finland consists of the work done by municipalities, parishes and NGOs. Municipalities are obliged to create the preconditions for local youth work through providing services and premises for young people's engagement.</p>	<p>Part of the state funding for youth work comes from the annual National Lottery Budget. Due to Covid-19 crisis and ethical debate on the sustainability of national lottery earnings in general, the funding from this line will be diminished.</p> <p>Responding to the polarisation of Finnish youth while at the same time maintaining the proper balance between the traditionally important universal youth work and targeted youth work.</p> <p>The capacity of youth work to act as a reliable partner and to provide solutions to more general societal challenges related to youth unemployment, mental health etc. On the local level, this means developing multi-professional networks in welfare policies and services and on developing school-based youth work.</p> <p>An urbanisation trend in Finland, which means that some municipalities will have only a small number of young people in the future. Providing them enough services will be an important theme in the future.</p> <p>Developing multi-professional networks in welfare policies and services and on developing school-based youth work.</p> <p>Finding ways to demonstrate the value and impact of youth work done in the local communities.</p>

SUPPORT NEEDED

- The continued support by the Council of Europe expertise and instruments could help to further develop the quality youth work in Finland (an example: a Council of Europe expert team supported the process of the revision of the Youth Act in 2017);
- A stronger role by the EU-CoE youth partnership, incl. EKCYP and PEYR, in the preparation and implementation of the peer-learning activities could improve both the evidence-base and the quality of the activities and thus increase the credibility of the process;
- Erasmus+/Youth is an important instrument to contribute to the internationalisation of local level. However, a greater attention should be paid to the quality (not only quantity) of the projects. Youth workers' mobility, knowledge-building and long-term development projects should be enhanced in order to achieve more lasting results;
- The long-standing work, tools and methods of the Council of Europe are not as well known as the EU financing opportunities at the local level. The Quality Label of youth centres is an excellent example for increasing the visibility of the Council of Europe work through an instrument providing concrete support, training and quality materials for the development of the centres and youth work at local level.

GREATEST NEED FOR FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH WORK IN THE NEXT THREE YEARS

Supporting the ability of youth work to tackle emerging challenges and innovate its practices.

ADDITIONAL SOURCES

- EKCYP youth work country sheet link: <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/58820665/YW-Country-sheet-Finland.pdf/848e13c0-74bd-cc54-844b-c9674d6ae997>
- Youth Wiki youth work chapter link: <https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/content/youthwiki/10-youth-work-finland>