

# Perspective on Youth Work Developments

## IRELAND FACT SHEET

The 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 3<sup>rd</sup> 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: voluntary organisations supported by national strategies, policies and funding.

**Highlights with regard to youth work development;**

Vibrant field of voluntary organisations providing youth work in Ireland is supported by legislation, national policies and national frameworks.

STRENGTHS & SUCCESSES	CHALLENGES
<p>Youth work in Ireland is delivered through a diverse infrastructure of committed voluntary organisations, supported by legislation: the Youth Work Act (2001) and the Education and Training Boards Act (2013), national policies: the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People (2014), National Youth Strategy (2015), and national frameworks: the National Quality Standards Framework (2010).</p> <p>A definition of youth work is explicitly set out in legislation.</p> <p>The sector is highly organised, responsive and flexible.</p> <p>Youth work organisations have strong collaborative relationships in addressing the needs of young people.</p> <p>There is a commitment to providing high quality education and training specific to youth work at different levels of the educational system, including at higher education level.</p>	<p>Ensuring cooperation and collaboration across boundaries and borders: <i>Improving cross-government working for young people</i> forms part of an overall reform agenda for public services and publicly funded services.</p> <p>The lack of multi-year funding can inhibit long-term planning and foster competition instead of promoting collaboration. Recent funding development has focused on targeted youth work to support marginalised, disadvantaged and vulnerable young people. This needs to be balanced by appropriate development in universal youth work.</p> <p>Securing widespread recognition for youth work as a distinct form of informal and non-formal educational practice, which requires high-level education/training and ongoing support, is a challenge.</p> <p>The National Quality Standards Framework is a valuable process that promotes quality youth work by providing a developmental framework for youth work provision at regional and local levels. There is a challenge in terms of capacity and resources regionally to support the self-assessment and validation process essential for planning quality work that is responsive to the emerging needs of young people.</p> <p>The youth population is growing and the demographics of Ireland are changing. Youth work needs to be resourced to engage successfully with the opportunities and challenges posited by this dynamic context, especially in relation to issues of diversity and interculturalism.</p>

	<p>Many youth organisations at local level rely on facilities/space from others, some of which was inaccessible during Coronavirus-19 restrictions.</p> <p>Access to specialist services can be a challenge leading to a disparity of support between urban and rural areas.</p> <p>The absence of secure employment and clear career progression pathways is a challenge for the retention of staff.</p> <p>Lack of sector wide comprehensive support for volunteers can be disincentive to long-term engagement.</p> <p>Need to maintain the primary value of face-to-face youth work in the face of an emerging view that youth work could be delivered more effectively and efficiently using digital platforms.</p>
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#### **SUPPORT NEEDED :**

The youth field of Ireland would benefit from following developments:

The introduction of the Open Method of Co-ordination Governance Model in the Youth field.

European wide research on the impact of youth work to inform national policy and encourage more investment.

Common policies across Europe to create a wider recognition of youth work.

Inclusion in the reporting process on the EU Youth Strategy.

The development of a competency framework and implementation strategy on digital youth work.

Strengthening the relationship between the primary providers of EU funded youth work and the Commission.

Emphasising the Youth Voice through funding and support of the EU Youth Dialogue.

On-going work to simplify and support the application process for EU funding programmes.

Supporting the ability of youth work to tackle emerging challenges through innovation. This relates to the ongoing education, training and professional qualifications of youth workers.

More support for rural access.

Supporting the National Agency to enable youth workers to engage in the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corp programmes.

Reducing the administrative burden for youth workers in the European projects.

Direct support from NA to marginalised young people.

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

Aim 2: Ensuring and expanding the provision of youth work

Aim 5: Supporting the ability of youth work to tackle emerging challenges and innovate its practices

Aim 6: Enhancing the promotion and recognition of youth work

#### **ADDITIONAL SOURCES**

- Maurice Devlin: Thinking about youth work in Ireland. In Hanjo Schildt, Nuala Connolly, Francine Labadie, Jan Vanhee & Howard Williamson (eds.) Thinking Seriously about Youth Work and How to Prepare People to do it. Council of Europe & European Commission. <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47261623/Thinking+seriously+about+YW.pdf/6b620a71-f7be-cf80-7da9-17408a3960ba>