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ENHANCING A UNIVERSAL
GUIDE AND NETWORK FOR
THE YOUTH WORKERS
OF THE FUTURE



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WHAT IS YOUTH WORK?

Youth Work has been subject to various interpretations, while depending on the national context it appears as a field related to or a branch of Social Work applied to Youngsters.

Despite the lack of a universal definition, there are certain elements that are common:

- importance of **non-formal** and informal education, meaning that Youth Work takes place outside the institutional educational system;
- emphasis on holistic human development through the cultivation of **soft and transversal skills**. Youth work facilitates the personal, social and educational development of young people enabling them to reach their potential;
- importance of **voluntary participation** and the involvement in activities that rarely have a tangible result, as wage labor or institutional education that results in a degree.

In a nutshell, the common elements in the definitions of Youth Work outline the broadness and dynamic essence of the term.

YOUTH WORK THEN AND NOW



History of Youth work – Greece

Although “youth work” as a term is not very familiar to the Greek society, it has been present in Greece as a practice - based on descriptions by practitioners in the field - since the 19th century with the foundation of the Greek state (1830). At that time youth work activities were concentrated on the accommodation of orphans from the War of Independence and the moral education of the younger generations. The most important youth organisations active at that time included religious youth organisations, the scouts, the National Youth Organisation, and the United Panhellenic Organisation of Youth. Gradually, new youth organisations were created, mainly political. After the fall of the dictatorship (1974), Greece has experienced further institutionalisation and integration of youth work with the foundation of the General Secretariat for Youth, built upon the leisure time management and skill acquisition by young people.

Nowadays, activities related to Youth Work in Greece are focused on personal, as well as professional development, leisure time and active citizenship. Main agents of youth work are the youth leaders and NGO members, Student Unions, adult educators, employees at private educational institutions, social workers, psychologists, doctors, career consultants, animators, religious leaders, scouts, summer camp team leaders, sport coaches and art (dance, singing, theater, etc.) mentors that work with young people.

In addition, the General Secretariat for Youth, the International Relations and Career Offices at the Universities and the Erasmus+ National Agency are at the young people’s disposal.

Youth Work’s official recognition as a profession is pursued by the Greek Association of Youth Workers.

References:

Mission Responsible Preliminary Research Report & Study Visit in Athens, Greece Report Giannaki, Dora. “Youth work in Greece: a historical overview.” The history of youth work in Europe Relevance for today’s youth work policy (2014): 91.



History of Youth work – Italy

In the Italian scenario there is neither a definition of youth work, nor a clear definition of “young people”. The fragmentation of the national scenario into different perspectives of youth work does not help to define a clear profile of the youth worker (see also country fact sheet: www.eu-network.net/results). Although, youth work in terms of “animazione socio – educativa” (European Commission) and “operatore giovanile”, term used by the Italian National Youth Council (Forum Nazionale Giovani) appeared in the national scenario in the 90s, only in 1997 youth policies have started paying more attention to the issue of promoting youth sociability and the development of educational and recreational services which actively promote youth sociability nationwide.

Nowadays the Youth Work movement is rising, but still it is connected to the non-profit sphere and the political actions for the support of youth work are not enough to boost its growth and recognition.



History of Youth work – Spain

In Spain the beginning of youth work has been influenced by the Catholic religion and the victory of dictator Franco in the Civil war. Until the 1970s youth policy was seen as a vehicle for ideological indoctrination. However, by the 1960s with the rise of anti-Franco social and political movements, the repercussions of the May 1968 student protests in France and the first counter-cultural youth movements, young people started to organize themselves and to oppose the regime. Then, the transition to a democratic system of governance contributed to the expansion and consolidation of the youth work field and to a gradual convergence with other European countries (Spain joined the European Union in 1986). Youth policies were developed at all levels of public administration, a whole network of youth organisations came into being (centered on youth councils) and social and educational work with young people became more professional and structured.

Nowadays, the fields of action related to youth work in Spain have been channeled through an indirect and limited means by different educational policies related to the formal education. With a lesser role, actions in non-formal education and in the vocational training sector have been developed by Third-Sector agents (associations, NGOs, etc.).

Reference:

Rafael Merino, Carles Feixa, Almudena Moreno: A brief history of youth work in Spain (History of Youth Work in Europe Vol. 6. Council of Europe)

History of Youth work – Germany

Youth work in Germany holds a long tradition. The beginning of the industrialization brought the problem of ‘youth’ into the society and from there youth work was mainly taken up by charitable church groups with volunteers running shelters for impoverished children, adolescents and orphans. The origins of institutionalised youth work in Germany date back to the beginning of the 20th century. In the ‘Weimar Republic’ they were known as ‘urban youth homes’, ‘youth clubs’ and ‘open youth houses’.

During the period of National socialism, independent youth work associations were mostly destroyed and youth work was made to serve the national socialist ideology. After the Second World War, youth work in Germany experienced a strong upswing as the Allies recognised the importance of investing in youth facilities and youth work to turn German children and adolescents towards democratic thinking (“re-education”). Youth work in the GDR was strongly linked to the protestant church. There was also a nationwide youth club structure, which was part of the party-state youth policy of SED and FDJ.

In West Germany, the independent youth home associations, set up in the 1970s and still active in many places today, aimed at politically engaging young people. Since the 1980s, youth work has assumed more social policy functions and now acts as a support structure for disadvantaged young people. Although youth work has been increasingly caught in the maelstrom of economization since the 1990s, it is still seen as an important part of the communal social service infrastructure and provides a space for youth development through self-organised leisure activities and cultural youth events.

Sources:

Hafeneger, Benno (2013): Geschichte der offenen Kinder- und Jugendarbeit seit 1945. In: Ulrich Deinet, Benedikt Sturzenhecker (Hrsg.): Handbuch offene Kinder- und Jugendarbeit.

HOW TO BECOME A YOUTH WORKER, STEP BY STEP

In general, if you are interested to work with young people or become a youth worker there are different ways to follow, depending on the country you are residing and willing to exercise youth work. You may pursue a higher education degree in social work, social sciences (sociology, psychology, economics, social policy etc.) and/or pedagogy.

You may also get experience in youth work related matters from public or private vocational trainings on national and international level (such as EU funded programmes, private vocational training centers and institutes, and centers for adult education).

Additionally, different non-governmental non-profit organizations and associations offer trainings, seminars and learning opportunities that may help you in the process of acquiring experience in youth work.

The “EU-NET” research showed that it is important to combine formal and non-formal education in order to get the necessary educational background to become a Youth Worker. In the four countries (Spain, Italy, Greece and Germany) surveyed Youth Workers highlighted that, apart from the combination of formal and non-formal education, practical experience is crucial.

Hence, future Youth Workers ought to invest time in activities such as volunteering or non-formal learning activities that entail rich experiences.

Formal Education Degree or official certification on Humanitarian and Social Sciences (Optional) or

Acquire Vocational Training as an educator in a technical College if needed



Get involved in youth initiatives and work with youth on voluntary basis

Join an organization fulfilling you passion, taking part in their activities, and gradually undertaking specific responsibilities . Participate in trainings on youth work, non-formal learning and youth issues



Deepening the knowledge on specific topics

Get specific skills through trainings involving non-formal learning, participate, and act on local, regional, national and international level



Turn volunteering youth work to professionalised youth work

Work professionally in a public or private provider of services focused on youth empowerment, safety, education and training. Design, manage and organise activities

WHAT COMPETENCES AND SKILLS THE YOUTH WORKER NEEDS?

Since the education and the training of a Youth Worker is not systematic, the necessary competences and skills useful to those interested in the profession are not set in stone with the exception of countries like Austria, Germany and Switzerland. Skills necessary for the profession of the youth worker mainly fall under the category of “soft skills”.

These skills are:

- Team work
- Ability to solve conflicts
- Strategic vision
- Adaptability / Flexibility
- Capability for lifelong learning
- Communication and interpersonal skills
- Intercultural awareness
- Creativity
- Self-reflection
- Empathy and advisory skills

Apart from the ones on the list, communication in foreign languages and digital skills are among the practical competences that are considered crucial for an efficient practice. Experience with group facilitation and non-formal education techniques are the skills that were distinguished too.

HOW CAN I ACQUIRE THESE COMPETENCES AND SKILLS?

- Formal education in selected countries
- Training and professional development for Youth Workers (as per the image below)
- A combination of both



- Pool of Trainers of the National Agencies including access to training opportunities
- Formal education trainings at national level (e.g. VET training of Socio cultural Worker, which includes a part of Youth Information/Counselling)
- Non-formal education providers (youth organisations, NGOs, etc.).
- Online and offline training opportunities (local, regional, national, European, international)



Educational and training opportunities in Greece

- National Organisation for Certification of Skills and Career Guidance (EOPPEP) in Greece, gives the official certification for Trainer of adults for non-formal education after successful completion of the national examination.
www.eoppep.gr/index.php/en/eoppep-en
- EOPPEP has certified a number of Public and Private Centers for Lifelong Learning that are officially recognized for providing trainings for trainers for adults of non-formal education.
- Public & Private Vocational training institutes (IEK), private vocational training centers (KEK), centers for adult education (KEE) provide youth work-related subjects, such as social care, pedagogy, counseling, leisure time management and organization.
- Specialized University programmes for trainers of adults for non-formal education, either independently or in cooperation with other private provider (examples):
 - National and Kapodistrian University of Athens www.adet-uoa.gr
 - University of Thessaly http://learning.uth.gr/ekpaideusi_ekpaideutikwn_anilikwn/
 - University of Patras <http://kek.upatras.gr/courses/adult-trainers-training/>
 - Aristotle University of Thessaloniki <http://diaviou.auth.gr/eedvm>
 - University of Aegean <http://e-epimorfosi.aegean.gr/course/>
- Academic University Programmes (examples):
 - Technological Educational Institute of Athens, Department of Social Work www.teiath.gr/seyp/socialwork
 - Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, School of Philosophy and Education www.auth.gr/en/edlit
 - University of Macedonia, Department of Educational and Social Policy, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts www.uom.gr/index.php?newlang=eng&tmima=7&categorymenu=2
 - National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Department of Education https://en.uoa.gr/schools_and_departments/school_of_education/

It is important to mention that none of the above leads to an officially recognized certification for youth work in Greece.

Educational and Training Opportunities in Germany

- JULEIKA (Germany): www.juleica.de
- JUGEND für Europa (Germany): www.jugendfuereuropa.de
- Deutsches Kinderhilfswerk (Germany): www.dkhw.de
- IJAB – International Youth Service of the Federal Republic of Germany: www.ijab.de/en/what-we-do/overview

Educational and Training Opportunities in Italy

- Web portals for motilities and training courses: www.portaledeligiovani.it/
- Training courses section: www.portaledeligiovani.it/canali/erasmus/gioventu/corsi-animatori-giovanili
- www.informagiovaniroma.it (informagiovani network is active in many Italian cities, so you would find many informagiovani centres around the country typing “informagiovani” in your search engine)
- www.eurodesk.it

Educational and Training Opportunities in Spain

- Spanish National Agency, Injuve (Open Calls for Youth Workers) www.erasmusplus.injuve.es/formacion/cursos/?__locale=es



THE FUTURE OF YOUTH WORK

We expect that Youth work will gain all the more popularity in the future. Youth work is called to address the constantly increasing heterogeneity among the young population focusing on the inclusiveness of new target groups (e.g. youth with migrant background, with disabilities, etc.). It also seeks to tackle the problem of rising youth unemployment and to stabilize the uncertain period called school-work transition. Regarding the demographic development, youth work could also play an important role in shaping a sustainable and at the same time attractive future for young people in rural areas.

With the increasing influence and application of Youth Work methods and initiatives for addressing the above issues, educators and trainers will be all the more aware of the potential power and benefit of Youth Work for the well-being of the society. Youth Work will acquire greater role in active citizenship and decision making, supporting a more inclusive, participatory and democratic education, where students are the ones who define their educational structure as the necessary basis for fulfilling their dreams and benefiting their community!

Despite the work of organisations and devotion of the youth workers, the future of the field depends largely on the decisions to be taken at policy making level. As a first step we see the recognition of the profession for the sake of its further development.

In addition, Youth Work is increasingly dependent on networking with other institutions and cross-working-group cooperation, as well as on the stronger promotion of volunteering. In times of financial cuts, another need that was identified by the EU-NET project is the improvement of the data regarding youth work and its providers, the visibility of services and activities, as for example, the establishment of a nationwide children and youth work Atlas or a continuous indicator-based report on youth work at national or European level.



We see Youth Work as a tool for social change. It will not only be a space where young people share, express, discuss and learn, but also where they actually become active citizens boosting societal improvements. In an increasingly digital and frenetic society, Youth Work will be placed at the vanguard of citizens' participation by implementing the most innovative participatory processes.

In this future context, Youth Workers will be young people's companions in their active participation journeys. They will be asked to follow and to support actions developed by and for young people, thereby becoming triggering agents for youth participation in the society of the future.

All in all, we envisage the expansion of the field after its professional recognition and full institutional support.



USEFUL RESOURCES

- COMPETENDO
http://competendo.net/en/Main_Page
- ALTO YOUTH TOOLBOX
www.salto-youth.net/tools/toolbox
- European Training Strategy: A Competence Model for Youth Workers to Work Internationally
www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-3460/CompetencemodelForYoutworker_Online-web.pdf
- BTM - Increase the Mobility of Young People through Youth Exchanges within Erasmus+ Youth in Action
www.salto-youth.net/rc/training-and-cooperation/tc-rc-nanetworktcs/btm
- Training manual for facilitators: Using soft skills in non-formal education
<https://ec.europa.eu/epale/en/resource-centre/content/training-manual-facilitators-using-soft-skills-non-formal-education>
- The RIDE Toolbox
<http://rideproject.eu/ride-toolbox/>
- MOSAIC: Training kit for Euro-Mediterranean Youth Work
www.jugendfuereuropa.de/download/doctrine/WebforumJFEWebsiteBundle:Publikation-file-1932/6577_T-Kit_11_A4_assemble.pdf
- Social Workers Toolbox: Tools and Resources
www.socialworkerstoolbox.com
- YEU (Youth for Exchange and Understanding)
www.yeu-international.org/en/publications/toolkits
- Council of Europe – European Union
<http://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/home>
- Youth Work Portfolio (Council of Europe)
www.coe.int/en/web/youth-portfolio
- Compass. Manual for Human Rights Education with young people (Council of Europe)
EN: www.coe.int/en/web/compass
ES: www.coe.int/es/web/compass/home
- BOOKMARKS. A Manual for combating hate speech online through human rights education
www.nohatespeechmovement.org/bookmarks?bookmarks
- Be the hero, be an EVS mentor!
www.hrdc.bg/ed_files/file/Guide_for_EVS_mentors.pdf
- RECONOCE
<https://app.reconoce.org>
- Raivotech: Raise volunteers in Tech (www.raivotech.eu) Open Online course available at <http://raivotech.emphasyscentre.com>
- E-skills for volunteers' project
www.e-volunteers.eu/it
- Youth Workers Certification Project
www.youth-workers.eu
- Global Platform network for youth led activism
<http://globalplatforms.org/what-we-do/tailor-made-capacity-building>
- Social Workers Toolbox: Tools and Resources for Social Workers
www.socialworkerstoolbox.com/
- Mission Responsible – Practices of Youth Work across the World
www.missionresponsible.eu

DATABASE OF USEFUL TOOLS AND INFORMATION

VIDEO TUTORIALS	SOURCE	LANGUAGE	LINK	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Using the ERASMUS+ Mobility Tool	Erasmus+ United Kingdom (National Agency)	English	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vD5Uh1RCaMM	Using the mobility tool of Erasmus+ project for correct project management
Youth work definition and understanding	Various sources	English	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yILVJGEDVxc https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mHuQmbbqwfA https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uj90HInOdrU	
Europass Mobility video tutorial	Europass UK	English	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-HhifGn4oc	Video that shows how to fill in the Europass in a correct way
How to write a Curriculum Vitae (CV)	We Are One Courses Channel	English	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XG85EwdB7BM	Practical guide on CV writing
Tutorial for Erasmus +	Agencia Nazionale Giovani	Italian	https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLN_fwXQMYOLj4Okn8ck5Sg-6nZ-uxf5zWm	Tutorial to fill mobility application and strategic partnership application
Lifelong learning key competences	EVS volunteers	English Portuguese	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RD-elxXm1lw	Two EVS volunteers explain what key competences are
L'educazione non formale (Miguel Belletti - Herramienta Fair 2016)	Agencia Nazionale Giovani	Italian	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5f5VzILdwY8&t=312s	Miguel Belletti, Ang Trainer talks @Tool Fair 2016 about „Competences and non-formal education to foster inclusion and learning”
Soft Skills e mercato del lavoro	Pontificia facoltà di Scienze dell'educazione	Italian	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OmgNuXyWGT4	What does soft skill mean? Which are the soft skills and how do they relate to the job market?

VIDEO TUTORIALS	SOURCE	LANGUAGE	LINK	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
La mobilità influenza per lo sviluppo della personalità	TEDx Torino	Italian	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YFAp88HHQIQ	The role of mobility in the development of personal competences, an inspirational speech by M. Belletti
Youth Work Essentials	Scottish YNA	English	http://www.youthworkessentials.org/media/40344/outcomes_wheel.pdf http://www.youthworkessentials.org/media/40356/looking_back.pdf http://www.youthworkessentials.org/media/40456/chataway_recording.pdf	Assessment tool for youth workers activities (Longer terms local activities)
Youth work Essentials	Scottish YNA	English	http://www.youthworkessentials.org/media/40438/wallpaper_1_and_2.pdf http://www.youthworkessentials.org/media/40444/wallpaper_recording.pdf http://www.youthworkessentials.org/media/40338/triggers.pdf	Assessment tool for youth workers activities (one off activities assessment)
Using the ERASMUS+ Mobility Tool	Erasmus+ United Kingdom (National Agency)	English	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vD5Uh1RCaMM	Video tutorial that explains how youth practitioners and youth organisations can use the mobility tool of Erasmus+ project for correct project management

VIDEO TUTORIALS	SOURCE	LANGUAGE	LINK	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Beneficiary Reports Mobility Tool	Foundation for the Management of European Lifelong Learning Programmes (Cyprus)	English	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PqGWUD8cFzs	Video tutorial that explains how youth practitioners and youth organisations can use the mobility tool of Erasmus+ to report financed activities of project implementation
Europass Mobility video tutorial	Europass UK	English	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-HhifGn4oc	Video that shows how to fill in the Europass in a correct way
Europass CV: Showcase your skills	Europass UK	English	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-f5VVujcf44	Video for young people that explains how to fill in a Europass CV
La educación no formal	UDIMA (Distance Learning University of Madrid)	Spanish	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r2Ya84DqsQ0	The University explains the History and features of non-formal education
Ejemplo práctico del taller de Inteligencia Emocional	Educando con Cerebro	Spanish	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_6EahKNr6Mo	A video that shows several activity proposals to work on emotional intelligence

YOUTH WORKERS' STATEMENTS

Angelo C. (Futuro Digitale, Youth Worker, Italy)

"I think that experience makes the difference, it drives knowledge and the ability to read context and enhance the impact of your daily work with youth"

Antonella M. (Futuro Digitale, Youth Worker, Italy)

"Activism and curiosity made me a better youth worker, being aware of my rights and raise awareness of the people living in my area and being aware of the context surrounding me had a clear role in my life decision as a woman and youth worker!"

Fernando Servera Toledo

(Local Youth Council of Valencia, Project Manager and Youth Worker, Spain)

"There is a need to have more professional networks of youth work that have a specific training area", "In the future, the youth work will be focused on creating participatory spaces and fostering networks through digital tools"

Miguel Vilar Pastor

(Local Youth Council of Valencia, Sociocultural and Youth Worker, Spain)

"There is a positive evolution in youth policies development, but it is a too slow evolution still" "The main problem is that youth policies are not created by young people and their needs. Hence, such needs are not addressed"

Javier Milán López

(GoEurope, Trainer, Youth Worker and Project Assistant, Spain)

"Youth Work needs to become an inclusive societal tool to guarantee the participation and rights of young people in an egalitarian and fair society"

Maria Mackert (Caritas, Youth worker, Germany)

"For me, youth work means providing spaces in which young people can realize their ideas, experience self-efficacy and positive appreciation and develop according to their own ideas."

Lidvina Kadenbach (Jugendclub Merseburg, Youth worker, Germany)

"Youth work gives young people the opportunity to develop freely and thus promotes their creativity. This creates spaces in which young people can be themselves."

Boyka Boneva (Inter Alia, Youth Worker, Greece)

"Youth work is the answer to the deficiencies in the Educational system, a reciprocal and deeply rewarding process."

Altino Barradas (Proposito Inadiavel, Youth Worker, Portugal)

"There are a humankind and a possible better humankind. Youth work, through informal and non-formal learning, is an important tool for this path."

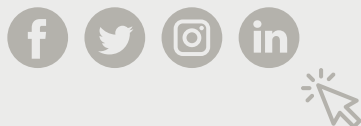
Theresa Lempp

(Jugend- & Kulturprojekt e.V., Project Manager and Youth Researcher, Germany)

"In the course of increased performance pressure in everyday life youth work provides an open space for young people to develop their voice, influence and place in society."







www.go-europe.es



www.futurodigitale.org



www.interaliaproject.com



www.jkpev.de



www.idea-alzira.com



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