Ongoing Developments within the European Youth Work Community of Practice

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JUGEND für Europa – National Agency (Germany) for the EU programmes Erasmus+ Youth in Action and European Solidarity Corps

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Executive Summary

The strength of youth work lies in its vivid practice and in the way it engages young people, builds relationships with them and supports their personal and social development. Its strength also lies with the community of practice: its committed youth work practitioners, volunteers, policymakers, activists, managers and researchers, to name just a few of the roles that make youth work what it is. Youth work is beneficial for young people as well as for society at large.

This paper explores the ongoing developments that have been taking place in youth work between 2015 and 2020. It seeks to highlight what it is that keeps youth work strong and what keeps it as an evolving practice of development. It also serves as a guide to the possible content of the European Youth Work Agenda (EYWA).

It is important to note that it also considers the 2020 Covid-19 crisis and its possible impact on youth work. Even just after the emergence of this worldwide pandemic, it was already evident that the lives of young people as well as the practice of youth work was and would continue to be heavily affected by the restrictions on public life.

Contents of the Paper

The paper consists of five chapters. It begins with a more in-depth explanation of the reasoning and approach for this paper (Chapter 1), then looks at the concept of development by defining the context and exploring it using a theoretical model (Chapter 2). Chapter 3 outlines what have been identified as significant "ongoing developments" in youth work at European level since the 2nd European Youth Work Convention in 2015, presented here in the form of "cluster topics". Having highlighted what has been achieved through these numerous cluster topics, the paper explores a number of identified challenges and success factors that affect ongoing developments (Chapter 4). The paper concludes by exploring the links between the cluster topics and the aforementioned challenges and success factors, highlighting the insights gained that may provide input for the prospective European Youth Work Agenda (Chapter 5).

The writing of this paper was supported by the European Steering Group (ESG), the advisory board of Germany's Federal Youth Ministry for the 3rd European Youth Work Convention, which consists of experts from the youth work community of practice. The members of the ESG have supported the writing process by exploring and identifying developments that have or will have a major impact on youth work practice across Europe.

Development

There are many aspects and perspectives to development in the youth work context. Several are explored here in order to provide an all-encompassing understanding of what it is the paper wants to focus on when identifying the nature of "development". It is important to understand the work that is being done at all levels within the youth work sector: face-to-face work with young people within the youth work spaces provided, the dialogue in those spaces, information-sharing between every aspect of

youth work, analyses of what is happening in society and among young people, the strategies being developed to respond to existing and/or future issues, cooperation between the many sub-sectors of youth work, political affirmation of the work being done through the adoption of policies and papers, the influence of face-to-face youth work and the response and guidance at European level.

Abstracts of Cluster Topics

Based on the papers of Howard Williamson *Cornerstone Challenges for European Youth Work and Youth Work in Europe – Making the Connections and Bridging the Gaps* and the German Youth Institute *The European Discussion on Youth Work 2015-2020* as well as on ongoing practice and research activities, JUGEND für Europa identified a number of cluster topics to be explored in this paper. They were selected because they highlight the specific developments that have been taking place in youth work between 2015 and the present. It is important to note that the list is neither exclusive nor complete. The cluster topics are Youth Work as a Working Field; Knowledge Base, Research and a Better Understanding of Youth Work; Youth Work at the Local Level and Youth Work in Remote Areas; Recognition and Validation of Learning in Youth Work; Quality Development; Education and Training of Youth Workers and Youth Work Trainers; Volunteer Youth Workers; Participation; Citizenship; Inclusion and Diversity; Transition from Education to Employment; Migration and Refugees; Extremism and Violent Radicalisation; Innovation; Digitalisation; Environmental Sustainability; Youth Information; the Place of Youth Work within Youth Policy; and Funding Programmes and Mobility.

Challenges to and Success Factors for Development

There are numerous challenges to development in youth work. Some are clear and easy to identify, sometimes easy to tackle; however, many are less obvious and not easy to tackle. The following challenges have been identified in a series of meetings and workshops: Delayed Responses; Focus on Current Issues; Shrinking Spaces; Resources; Intra-Sectoral and Cross-Sectoral Communication; the Community of Practice; Cross-Sectoral Connections; and Legal Provisions.

In the same series of meetings and workshops, the following have been identified as key success factors for development: Intra Sectoral Dialogue; The Whole Community of Practice; Strategy; Political Level; Transfer of Knowledge and Sharing of Information; Understanding the Diversity of Practice; European Dimension; Analysis and Building of Knowledge; Monitoring.

Outlook

The youth work sector's slowness to respond to digitalisation, its reticence to respond to young people calling for climate change and the speed with which it has adapted to the pandemic show its many different faces, reveal some of its fragility, and highlight a number of its strengths. In all scenarios, there are good and poor practices to be learnt from.

Connection to the EYWA

The EYWA is a potential strategic framework within which to support youth work to react to emerging challenges and to adopt innovative practices. The ongoing developments connect to the EYWA through supporting integrated policy development, expanding youth work provision, strengthening common ground, supporting quality youth work, and enhancing the promotion and recognition of youth work. Thanks to the analysis this paper provides, it is easier to recognise and understand ongoing and upcoming developments, structural challenges, and success factors. On the one hand, the EYWA is intended to serve as a framework for the general development of youth work in Europe by supporting and developing the success factors. On the other, it can act as a catalyst for the development of the specific topics of youth work practice across Europe.

The EYWA and the EYWC are ideal opportunities to focus on the following two areas:
- Strengthening the framework conditions for youth work and thus improving the external factors;
- Raising awareness of and strengthening the factors that can boost developments in specific areas: an enhanced understanding of the community of practice as a whole, more shared strategic approaches and political support, more intra-sectoral dialogue, better knowledge transfer and information sharing, a better understanding of the diversity of practice, more analysis and monitoring, and the added value of a strengthened European dimension.

This is a great window of opportunity which should be made use of by the community of practice in a joined spirit.

Introduction

The strength of youth work lies in its vivid practice and in the way it engages young people, builds relationships with them and supports their personal and social development. Its strength also lies with the community of practice: its committed youth work practitioners, volunteers, policymakers, activists, managers and researchers, to name just a few of the roles that make youth work what it is.

Youth work is beneficial for young people as well as for society at large – something Germany's Federal Government wants to support and promote through its Presidency of the Council of the European Union and the Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

Germany's Council Presidency, which runs from July to December 2020, has a number of priority areas. One of these priorities, led by the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, is the development and implementation of a European Youth Work Agenda, which is considered Germany's contribution towards the implementation of the current European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027.[1] The Strategy calls upon the Member States and the European Commission to "develop and implement a European Youth Work Agenda for quality, innovation and recognition of youth work" in a move to boost youth work across Europe. The Agenda is to serve as a strategic framework for the continued development and strengthening of youth work in both practical and political terms. To this end, under the German EU Council Presidency, the Council of Youth Ministers is scheduled to adopt a Council Resolution on the framework of establishing a European Youth Work Agenda in November 2020.

The call to develop a European Youth Work Agenda is also mentioned in the Council of Europe's Recommendation on Youth Work[2] and its Youth Sector Strategy 2030.[3] In both documents, the Council of Europe declares youth work to be one of its four thematic priorities, with a particular focus on "strengthening, recognising and promoting youth work policies and practices by embedding youth work in the youth policy framework, in particular through a European Youth Work Agenda and its implementation in close cooperation with the European Union". Germany will hold the Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe from November 2020 to May 2021.

2020 is a unique opportunity for both the European Union and the Council of Europe to take their cooperation on youth work to the next level. The German Federal Youth Ministry intends to establish the European Youth Work Agenda during the overlap between its Council Presidency and its Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe in December 2020. This is when the 3rd European Youth Work Convention[4] will bring this political commitment closer to Europe's youth work community of practice.

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[1] European Commission. *EU Youth Strategy.* https://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/youth-strategy_en

[2] Council of Europe. (2017). *Recommendation on Youth Work.* https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/-/recommendation-on-youth-work

[3] Council of Europe. (2020). *Youth Sector Strategy 2030.* https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/youth-strategy-2030

[4] For more information about the 3rd European Youth Work Convention, please refer to the website: www.eywc2020.eu/en

The youth work community of practice should be understood as a group of people, paid and voluntary, who share the same interests in resolving issues, improving their skills, and learning from each other's experiences. The youth work community of practice comprises stakeholders from local to European level, such as youth workers and youth leaders, youth work managers, project carriers, accredited and independent youth work organisations, trainers, researchers, educators of youth workers, local communities and municipalities, European-level institutions and organisations, youth representations, young people and youth policymakers. All the members of this community of practice have different mandates, roles and capacities when it comes to the further development of youth work.

Preparations for the European Youth Work Agenda began at the 2nd European Youth Work Convention in 2015, which took place under Belgium's Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. The final Declaration[5] of the Convention highlighted the relevance of youth work and the recognition thereof, called for more resources to be dedicated to youth work and non-formal education, and encouraged a debate around quality, competence and professionalisation. It concludes by calling for a European Youth Work Agenda.

Endeavouring to take this process further, the 3rd European Youth Work Convention will join forces with the youth work community of practice to explore the latest developments in the youth work sector, particularly in practice and policy. The Convention intends to serve as a starting point for the process of implementing the European Youth Work Agenda at local, regional, national and European levels, to help youth work in Europe evolve and remain strong in the long-term. The Convention will also focus on further developing strategies and planning actions, identifying priorities for implementation in different settings, and designing measures and activities to advance and boost youth work in Europe. It will also provide space for the development of potential objectives, benefits and impacts and the steps that are necessary to achieve this.

The youth work community of practice is invited to provide active input for the development of youth work in the context of the Agenda in cooperation with and supported by the European Union, the Council of Europe and member States.

Boosting youth work in Europe means making an active contribution to the field. This paper highlights what it is that keeps youth work strong and what it is that keeps it as an evolving practice of development. It also serves as a guide to the possible content of the European Youth Work Agenda, content which will also inform the programme of the 3rd European Youth Work Convention.

Contents of the Paper

The paper consists of five chapters. It begins with a more in-depth explanation of the reasoning behind and aim of the paper as a whole (Chapter 1).

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[5] EU-CoE Youth Partnership. (2015) *Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention.* https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47262187/The+2nd+European+Youth+Work+Declaration_FINAL.pdf

Chapter 2 looks at the concept of development by defining the concept and exploring it using a theoretical model.

Chapter 3 outlines what have been identified as significant "ongoing developments" in youth work at European level since the 2nd European Youth Work Convention in 2015, presented here in the form of "cluster topics". This chapter does not explore or analyse these developments but simply aims to highlight some of the many significant outcomes achieved by the youth work community of practice - through policies, declarations, projects, tools, activities, research and practice during this period.

Chapter 4 then endeavours to explore a number of identified challenges and success factors in connection with the ongoing developments.

The paper concludes with a look to the future by exploring the links between the cluster topics and the aforementioned challenges and success factors, highlighting the insights gained that may provide input for the prospective European Youth Work Agenda (Chapter 5).

The writing of this paper was supported by the European Steering Group (ESG), the advisory board of Germany's Federal Youth Ministry for the 3rd European Youth Work Convention, which consists of experts from the youth work community of practice. The members of the ESG have supported the writing process by exploring and identifying developments that have or will have a major impact on youth work practice across Europe.

1. Aim of this Paper

This paper explores and highlights the ongoing developments in the youth work sector from a European perspective between the 2nd European Youth Work Convention in 2015 and the 3rd European Youth Work Convention in 2020. It feeds into the content of the European Youth Work Agenda and the programme for the European Youth Work Convention. The paper is part of the preparatory materials of the EYWC.

Please note that this paper also considers the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on youth work. Very early on in the worldwide pandemic, it became clear how the lives of young people as well as the youth work community of practice was and would be heavily affected by the lockdown and limitations of public life. It has also impacted on the ongoing developments in youth work practice and on the outcomes of youth policy implementation. At this stage, the long-term impact of the crisis on youth work is rather difficult to foresee in detail, yet all analysed developments have to be considered against the backdrop of the current situation.

Approach

As a first step, a systematic search for documents on youth work that were published between 2015 and mid-2019 at the European level was performed in cooperation between the Centre of European Youth Policy at the German Youth Institute and JUGEND für Europa.[6] Second, the resulting list was extended by a manual search of documents known to the German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, JUGEND für Europa and the German Youth Institute but that did not appear in the systematic search. A group of experts validated this approach at the Exploratory Meeting for the Convention in May 2019. Third, a list of political decisions, processes, events, and (digital) platforms held between 2015 (after the 2nd European Youth Work Convention) and the present and near future was compiled by JUGEND für Europa. As a fourth step, the members of the ESG were asked to contribute to this overview at their first meeting in October 2019 and divide the items into core youth work subject areas, or "cluster topics" (see Chapter 2).

Fifth, in January 2020 a workshop was held with members of the ESG to identify the developments that have had a major impact on youth work practice in Europe. They also endeavoured to understand the meaning of "development" in the context of youth work in Europe and to identify the factors that contributed to the success of such developments. The conclusions of the workshop were summarised in a short report that was presented at the ESG meeting in February 2020 which focussed on enriching the findings through further exchanges, discussion and analysis.

This paper is therefore based on the many achievements of the youth work community of practice since the 2nd European Youth Work Convention.

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[6] More information about the document selection and an overview can be found here: Hofmann-van de Poll, Frederike (et al.): *The European Discussion on Youth Work 2015-2020.* https://www.eywc2020.eu/en/convention/resources/

2. Defining "Development"

The ESG has been engaged in and focussed on exploring a common understanding of ongoing developments in youth work at the European level. It is therefore important define what "development" means in this context. This chapter explores the concept and places it in the context of European youth work as well as the cluster topics detailed in the next chapter that showcase many of the developments in youth work since 2015.

Defining the Context

It is important to understand the work that is being done at all levels of the youth work community of practice: face-to-face work with young people, spaces provided for youth work and the youth work sector, the intra- and cross-sectoral dialogue that is happening, information-sharing between every aspect of youth work, analyses of what is happening in society and to young people, the strategies being developed to respond to existing and/or future issues, the many sub-sectors of youth work cooperating, the politicians affirming the work being done through the adoption of policies and documents, influence of face-to-face youth work and response and guidance at European level.

Defining Development

As described above, there are many aspects and perspectives to development in the youth work context and a single definition would not do justice to what the term means here. This section explores some aspects of how development is defined from a variety of angles.

As a starting point it is important to have a foundation for understanding. The basic dictionary definition of "development" is the gradual **growth** or formation of something,[7] the process in which something **changes** and becomes more **advanced**,[8] or a rise in **quality**.[9]

"Development" can also be described as engaging in a **deliberate effort** over time to make something active, causing it to **evolve** or unfold gradually, to lead that something through **successive states of change** and promote its growth.[10]

Exploring the Concept of Development in European Youth Work

The Austrian psychologist Werner Stangl[11] has explored human development. This section uses his three principles of development to explore the notion in a European youth work context.

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[7] Collins Dictionary. https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/development

[8] Cambridge Dictionary. https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/development

[9] Jackson, G. (2014). *What is meant by the concept of development? eNotes Editorial.* https://www.enotes.com/homework-help/what-meant-by-concept-development-470563

[10] Merriam Webster Dictionary. https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/develop

[11] Stangl, W. (2020). *Development.* Online lexicon for psychology and pedagogy. https://lexikon.stangl.eu/12182/entwicklung/

According to Stangl, development is generally understood to be a process of emergence or change, based on three principles:

- the principle of growth;
- the principle of maturation;
- the principle of learning.

The principle of growth mainly refers to the structure of a child's body in terms of shape, size, number, location and position. Transferred to a European youth work context, the structure is youth work itself, the more tangible elements of what we see and experience in the sector. The principle of growth therefore could be the Council of Europe's Recommendation on youth work coming into effect, or the Final Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention, or the introduction of competence models for youth workers and trainers through the European Training Strategy, or the recognition of youth work as a profession in a particular country. The establishment of political strategies, too, could be seen as resulting from the principle of growth.

Here in growth we can see advancement, deliberate effort, and practical developments.

The principle of maturation is about the development of a child's reflexes, instincts or other untaught behaviours. Youth work development in this context is youth work evolving and growing – that which comes from within. The principle of maturation could be youth work following its own principles and values in an ever-changing world and adapting them to new challenges such as climate change, digitalisation or a crisis like the current pandemic.

Here in maturation we can see evolution and change...

The principle of learning relates to conditioning, the act of learning and other environmental influences. This is about the influencing factors on youth work and how youth work responds, about how the sector reacts, conforms or rebels in relation to current situations in society, to movements within the sector, or to requirements of governments or international institutions. The principle of learning could be youth work being called upon to respond to radicalisation or unemployment or the Covid-19 pandemic. It could also be about increasing knowledge on youth work practice, or quality development of youth work practice, or the developments in the funding programmes for young people and the sector as a whole. This is not just about reacting, it is also about the quality of the response and the ability to create structures to do so more effectively.

Here in learning we can see developments in quality and successive states of change...

Development in youth work at the European level therefore can be seen as a dynamic process that touches upon youth work itself, all those involved in it and the current context (political, economic, social). It includes deliberate efforts in policy developments, advancements in recognition through actions, knowledge and political decisions, and the general growth of the sector. It is youth work continuing to evolve into what young people need by reacting to societies' and young people's needs. It is

the willingness of youth work to change and adapt. Development in youth work is the ability of the sector to not just respond to what is needed but to respond with quality, and to proactively drive progress forward, continuously seeking ways to be better and stronger.

3. Achievements by the Community of Practice - a Compilation of Cluster Topic Abstracts

This chapter references a large number of publications, policies, tools, activities, declarations and papers that have been clustered into different thematic areas. The resulting "cluster topics" cover many of the ongoing successful developments the youth work sector as a whole has undergone since the 2nd European Youth Work Convention. The list is neither exhaustive nor complete; instead, it provides a broad overview of the many examples that exist. While it focuses on results and achievements at the European level, it is acknowledged that many developments in all cluster topics take place at the local, regional and national levels too.

Youth Work as a Working Field

For many years youth work has been under strong political pressure to deal with rising challenges such as youth unemployment, austerity and social cohesion, amongst others. Despite this ongoing pressure, especially at the national and European levels the sector has also managed to focus on the development of youth work itself, from face-to-face work at the local level to policy recognition at the European level. There is clear evidence of this in various political documents and publications from a number of international institutions, some of which are shared below.

A particularly strong element of this was the Final Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention, which first proposed a European Agenda for Youth Work and argued for a focus on the development of quality youth work. The EU Council Conclusions on reinforcing youth work to ensure cohesive societies (2015/C 170/02)[12] also focus on furthering developments in youth work, especially through the education and training of youth workers. In 2017, the Council of Europe produced the Recommendation on Youth Work (CM/Rec(2017)4).[13] After the 2010 European Union Resolution on Youth Work, this was the first time a high-level European policy document focused purely and explicitly on youth work rather than on youth work as a side aspect. Amongst other things, the Recommendation strongly encouraged member States to develop and strengthen youth work policies and practice. The enormous impact of this Recommendation was further strengthened by accompanying activities such as the first Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on youth work in 2019 entitled *A Vision of Youth Work*,[14] and a guide to the Recommendation entitled *Youth Work in the Spotlight*.[15]

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[12] European Union. (2015). *Council conclusions on reinforcing youth work to ensure cohesive societies.* http://www.alliance-network.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/EU-council-concl_Youth-work-cohesive-society_May2015.pdf

[13] Council of Europe. (2017). *Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on youth work.* https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=0900001680717e78

[14] MOOC. (2019). A Vision of Youth Work. *Massive Open Online Course on the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers' Recommendation on Youth Work.* https://europeanyouthwork.com/

[15] Paddison, N. and Baclija-Knoch, S. (2020). *Youth Work in the Spotlight.* Council of Europe. https://rm.coe.int/09000016809e1c3a

One of the strongest steps in youth work has been the ongoing work towards launching a European Youth Work Agenda in the context of the 3rd European Youth Work Convention, with the support of both the European Union and the Council of Europe. It has been unofficially proposed that the Convention become a permanent fixture in the youth work calendar.

Knowledge Base, Research and a Better Understanding of Youth Work

A number of publications have promoted and explored youth work, either from a historical perspective or by exploring the concepts and realities of youth work across Europe. Much thematic reflection has taken place since the 2nd Convention, such as that published in the Youth Knowledge books of the Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth (Youth Partnership) and the History of Youth Work series.[16] What has also brought a greater focus to youth work is the introduction of a new chapter on youth work for each country to the Youth Wiki[17] on the EACEA National Policies Platform. The country sheets (covering a different set of countries) of the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYP) also contribute to the body of pan-European knowledge about youth work.

Since the 2nd Convention, not only has knowledge been created, it was also been distributed, thus contributing to a broader understanding of youth work. Two examples of this are the Massive Open Online Course *Essentials of Youth Work[18]* in September 2020 and the upcoming publication *Youth Work Essentials,* which will be published by the Youth Partnership in October 2020.

Despite these achievements, many gaps still exist which are weakening other aspects of youth work development. For example, in many countries there is hardly any data about youth work (practitioners, structures, services, young beneficiaries, etc.). These gaps deserve attention.

Youth Work at the Local Level and Youth Work in Remote Areas

Youth work mainly takes place at the local level and differs in terms of format and substance depending on where it takes place, who it is addressed at, how it is done and who is doing it. Two important developments at the European level have influenced and supported the local level. One was the crucial acknowledgement of role of the local level, when the Final Declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention called for a *European Charter on Local Youth Work*.[19] The Charter was adopted in June 2019 within the context of *Europe Goes Local*,[20] a long-term cooperation spanning approximately 120 municipalities, a number of National Agencies for the Erasmus+

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[16] EU-CoE Youth Partnership. *Youth Knowledge Books.* (See Editions 20 and 26; Thinking Seriously about Youth Work, and Education and Training of Youth Workers). https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/knowledge-books

[17] European Union. *Youth Wiki.* https://eacea.ec.europa.eu/national-policies/en/youthwiki

[18] EU-CoE Youth Partnership. (2020). *MOOC on Youth Work.* https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/mooc-on-youth-work

[19] Erasmus+ et al. *European Charter on Local Youth Work.* https://www.europegoeslocal.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/20190603-egl-charter.pdf

[20] Europe Goes Local. *A Strategic Partnership to Support Municipal Level Youth Work.* https://www.europegoeslocal.eu/

Youth in Action programme, bodies such as the European Youth Forum[21] and European networks such as POYWE[22] or ICY.[23] The Charter was conceived as a tool to start a dialogue between all the actors involved in youth work on the local level and to help strengthen quality in local youth work.

Secondly, the Croatian Presidency of the Council of the European Union directed the spotlight at youth work in remote areas[24] with a view to creating opportunities for young people in these regions. It identified the need to ensure better availability and accessibility of public and commercial services, quality jobs and education, digital and physical infrastructures, public transportation, and leisure activities. In particular, it emphasized the need to reduce inequalities between urban and remote or rural areas and to develop cross-sectoral measures that reflect the views and perspective of young people. The youth work sector was invited to raise awareness among young people and the general population of the opportunities within their local communities.

Recognition and Validation of Learning in Youth Work

Youth work still needs better recognition and validation. The great potential of this is highlighted in the EU Youth Strategy's core area of action "Empower", which calls for the establishment of a European Youth Work Agenda and identifies recognition as an essential objective for the Agenda besides innovation and quality.

Recognition of non-formal and informal learning has been strengthened by policy developments such as the revision of the key competences framework, a result of the EU Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning.[25] The recommendation offers a common understanding of competences needed now and in future, and encourages Member States to adopt measures to support the full potential of all learners. The revised key competences were incorporated into the Youthpass scheme[26] in 2019. In September 2019, the number of issued Youthpass certificates passed the one million threshold. To build on these achievements, a new Youthpass strategy is being developed to promote the recognition of non-formal learning in youth work even beyond current levels.

The developments related to the validation of competences developed in youth work settings are closely linked to the policy processes launched with the Council Recommendation of 20 December 2012 on the validation of non-formal and informal

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[21] European Youth Forum: https://www.youthforum.org/

[22] Professional Open Youth Work in Europe (POYWE). http://poywe.org/site/

[23] Inter City Youth (ICY). http://intercityyouth.eu/

[24] European Union. (2020). *Raising Opportunities for Young People in Rural and Remote Areas.* https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/44119/st08265-en20.pdf

[25] European Union. (2019). *Key Competences for Lifelong Learning.* https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/297a33c8-a1f3-11e9-9d01-01aa75ed71a1/language-en

[26] Youthpass is the European tool for young people to document and recognise the learning outcomes they have achieved through participation in youth work and solidarity activities within the EU youth programmes. https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/training-and-cooperation/youthpass/

learning.[27] Cedefop,[28] the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, supports the European Commission and EU Member States by – among other measures – regularly publishing a European Inventory on validation. The latest report concerns the state of affairs in 2018.[29] The 2016 update includes a thematic report on *Validation in the care and youth work sectors*.[30]

In 2016 the SALTO[31] Training and Cooperation Resource Centre published a document entitled *Recognition of youth work and of non-formal and informal learning within youth work*[32] that explored the state of play of policy developments, tools and stakeholder events on the European level. JUGEND für Europa started a process to explore learning in youth work, looking specifically at how youth workers accompany young people's learning processes. A research project was carried out between 2015 and 2017 and the final report, *Time to Show Off*,[33] appeared in 2019. This was further developed in 2019/2020 in a paper entitled *Focus: Learning*[34] that explores what learning in youth work is, the learning environment, the facilitation of learning, and the transfer of learning. The paper is a resource for both the formal and non-formal education and learning sectors.

The Council of Europe revised the *European Youth Work Portfolio*[35] in 2015. The Portfolio is an online tool for trainers, youth workers, managers, policymakers and others to explore their skills development. It contributes to the recognition of youth work and promotes a common understanding of quality development. In 2019 the *Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio Evaluative Study*[36] was published, providing a basis for the upcoming revision and update of the Portfolio, which will increase its potential outreach and reflect the developments in the field.

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[27] European Union. (2012). Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32012H1222%2801%29

[28] Cedefop is one of the EU's decentralised agencies, supporting the European Commission, EU Member States and the social partners in developing European vocational education and training (VET) policies. https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4147_en.pdf

[29] Cedefop. (2018). *The Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning. The European Inventory on Validation: Update 2018.* https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/validation-non-formal-and-informal-learning/european-inventory

[30] Cedefop. (2016). *The Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning. The European Inventory on Validation: Update 2016.* https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/validation-non-formal-and-informal-learning/european-inventory-2016

[31] SALTO-YOUTH is a network of seven Resource Centres working on European priority areas within the youth field. As part of the European Commission's Training Strategy, SALTO-YOUTH provides non-formal learning resources for youth workers and youth leaders and organises training and contact-making activities to support organisations and National Agencies (NAs) under the European Commission's Erasmus+ Youth programme and the European Solidarity Corps. https://www.salto-youth.net/

[32] SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre and JUGEND fur Europa. (2016). *Recognition of Youth Work and of Non-Formal and Informal Learning Within Youth Work.* https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-3335/5%20Overview%20of%20recognition%20policy%20developments%20April%202016.pdf

[33] Kloosterman, P. (2019). *Time to Show Off.* SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre and JUGEND fur Europa. https://www.youthpass.eu/downloads/13-62-284/Report_YP-TimeToShowOff_Final%20%282%29.pdf

[34] Not published at time of writing

[35] The European Youth Work Portfolio is an online tool that helps individuals, teams and organisations engaged in youth work across Europe to understand their skills and develop them more effectively. https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth-portfolio

[36] Unal, G, N. (2019). *The Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio Evaluative Study.* https://rm.coe.int/yoth-work-portfolio-evaluative-study-2020/16809ea75f

The International Youth Work Trainers Guild[37] uses a number of approaches to support the professional development of international youth work trainers and strives for this integral part of the youth work community of practice to be better recognised. The Guild worked with an international consortium of partners to develop AppRaiser,[38] an online 360° assessment and review platform with tools for self-assessment, external feedback and self-development planning that make skills more visible. AppRaiser is based on the European Training Strategy, a Competence Model for Trainers working in international contexts.[39]

Quality Development

The importance of quality development reflects the need to not sit back and assume youth work has been perfected. Quality should be constantly sought, especially given the ever-changing situation of society, which in turn influences the needs of young people.

Under the EU Work Plan for Youth (2014-2015) [40] the EU set up an expert group on "Youth Work Quality Systems in the EU Member States'' to examine the role of common indicators or frameworks of youth work quality systems in the EU Member States. This produced a report entitled *Quality Youth Work. A common framework for the further development of youth work*[41] as well as a practical handbook entitled *Improving youth work: your guide to quality development*.[42] It supports youth workers and youth organisations in understanding how to develop indicators, how to assess them and how to use this knowledge and practice development for organisational development.

The Council of Europe developed the Quality Label of Youth Centres[43] in 2010. Since then 14 youth centres have been awarded the Quality Label, in many cases during the period covered by this paper. The scheme is based on a set of criteria and indicators at European level that directly and indirectly supports qualitative developments in youth work.

The Quality Label scheme organises an annual European Platform for Youth Centres. In 2020 it held the 5th training course for youth centre educational staff. The brochure *The*

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[37] The Guild was established in 2015 as an independent organisation made up of trainers involved in the international youth work sector from across Europe and neighbouring regions. https://iywt.org/

[38] IYWTG. *Appraiser.* https://appraiser.badgecraft.eu/

[39] SALTO Training and Cooperation. *ETS Competence Model for Trainers.* https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/training-and-cooperation/trainercompetencedevelopment/trainercompetences/

[40] European Union. (2014). *Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2014-2015.* https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A42014Y0614%2802%29

[41] European Commission. (2015). *Quality Youth Work - A common framework for the further development of youth work.* https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/youth/library/reports/quality-youth-work_en.pdf

[42] European Commission. (2017). *Improving youth work - your guide to quality development.* https://ec.europa.eu/youth/news/20171016-improving-youth-work-guide-quality-development_en

[43] In 2010 the European Steering Committee on Youth for the Council of Europe developed a project to promote the European Youth Centres of the Council of Europe as standard-setting instruments and examples of good practice for youth policy. The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe approved the initiative.

Council of Europe Quality Label for Youth Centres[44] was reprinted in 2015, which describes the concept of the Quality Label, explains the criteria, and outlines the application process. The publication *The Council of Europe Quality Label for Youth Centres. Role, value and impact of youth centres*[45] appeared in 2018, describing the youth centres' function and their potential contribution to youth work.

The enormous potential contribution of an exchange among practitioners to quality development is evident in projects such as the Erasmus+ YiA-funded strategic partnership *Inspiring Quality Youth Work*.[46] Through peer learning and an exchange of methods and best practices between eight youth work organisations and the young people they work with, this partnership developed a set of common quality indicators and thus helped to create a better common understanding of what constitutes quality in youth work.

A strong focus on quality is hugely important for the youth work sector. If youth work is allowed to be whatever anyone wants it to be, that weakens the sector as a whole and does a disservice to young people. As a participant in a 2019 European Youth Foundation (EYF)[47] annual work plan-funded project put it, "Anything can be youth work but not everything is!"[48] This relates strongly to quality. Anyone can work with young people and call it youth work, but that does not mean it is youth work. The existence of indicators and a greater awareness among youth organisations of how to assess to what degree these indicators are met makes it becomes possible to both identify what youth work is and work on developing the quality of a specific youth work practice. Quality of practice also translates to positive organisational development, which in turn strengthens the sector overall. Interestingly, quality development is flanked by a growing number of networks, associations and support measures or structures. Although the emergence of youth workers' associations is by no means the norm in most countries, they do play an important role in the quality development and in the debate on professionalism.[49]

Education and Training of Youth Workers and Youth Work Trainers

Education and training in youth work has been moving higher up the agenda in recent years. Given that youth workers and trainers are key players in the provision of youth

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[44] Council of Europe. (2015). *The Council of Europe Quality Label for Youth Centres.* https://rm.coe.int/quality-label-brochure-en-2015/16806fcf1b

[45] Council of Europe. (2018). *The Council of Europe Quality Label For Youth Centres. Role, value and impact of youth centres.* https://rm.coe.int/youthcentre-en-role-value-impact-165x235-web/16809ec197

[46] InterCity Youth. *Inspiring Quality Youth Work. Using Indicators to Strengthen the Quality of Youth Work.* http://intercityyouth.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/Book-v3B.pdf

[47] The European Youth Foundation is a fund established in 1972 by the Council of Europe to provide financial and educational support for European youth activities. https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-youth-foundation

[48] Nik Paddison 2019 – Youth for Exchange and Understanding: The Wizards of Youth Work, Brussels, Belgium.

[49] Taru, M. Krzaklewska, E. and Basarab, T. (eds). (2020) *Youth Worker Education in Europe. Policies, Structures, Practices.* Council of Europe and European Commission. https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47261623/Web-PREMS-051920-Education-of-youth-workers-in-Europe.pdf/484a2b36-7784-d953-bfc4-2a34c988e854.
and
O'Donovan, J. (2020). *Promoting Quality in Youth Work Practice in Europe.* Council of Europe and European Commission. https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47262613/Promoting-quality-in-youth-work-practice-in-Europe.pdf/4b1c66a0-65e6-bddd-fbe3-ed244a0acd76.

work, the close link between this area and quality development is unsurprising. Several references are made directly to the development of quality youth work in the context of education and training.

Between 2014 and 2016, the European Training Strategy[50] (ETS) developed two competence models, one for *Youth Workers to Work Internationally*[51] and one for *Trainers Working at International Level*.[52] Both models incorporate complementary training courses and self-assessment tools, and in the youth workers model offers online tools and online training activities. ETS also hosted a conference in 2018 entitled *The Quality Bonus - developing strategies for better capacity building and quality development through the education and training of youth workers*.[53] The 2nd ETS conference will take place in March 2021 with a particular focus on the training and competence development of youth workers. The ETS is being revised in 2020 and, under the overarching framework of "quality, innovation and recognition", will give far more space to the development of youth workers' competences, connected to the theme of education and training of youth workers. In terms of supporting projects and activities, the next edition will focus on the development of peer learning activities and youth workers' competence development.

The education and training division of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe has worked hard to establish quality criteria for non-formal education activities. *Quality standards in education and training activities of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe*[54] was revised in 2016. The document provides assurance to all involved partners that the stated aims and objectives of a given activity are openly defined and will be achieved to the greatest extent. It also refers to what should be incorporated in certain activities and how they should be prepared, delivered and evaluated.

The *Enter!* project[55] of the Council of Europe held the third *Enter!* long-term training course for youth workers[56] in 2017/2018. It represents relevant experiences of the role of European training activities in the curricula and professional path of youth workers.

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[50] ETS was originally introduced as part of the YOUTH Programme (2000-2006), it is a cooperation between the Commission, the SALTO Resource Centres / European Solidarity Corps and the National Agencies of Erasmus+. It is an instrument for sustainable capacity building in the field of youth. The strategy encourages cooperation within the sector to improve the quality of youth work and its recognition.

[51] SALTO Training and Cooperation. *ETS Competence Model for Youth Workers to Work Internationally.* https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/training-and-cooperation/tc-rc-nanetworktcs/youthworkers-competence-model/

[52] SALTO Training and Cooperation. *ETS Competence Model for Trainers.* https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/training-and-cooperation/trainercompetencedevelopment/trainercompetences/

[53] Baclija-Knoch, S and Paddison, N. (2019). *The Quality Bonus.* JUGEND für Europa/SALTO Training & Cooperation. Bonn. https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-4066/ETS_conference_2018_documentation__Final.pdf

[54] Council of Europe. (2016). *Quality standards in education and training activities of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe.* https://rm.coe.int/1680703013

[55] Council of Europe. *About Enter!* https://www.coe.int/en/web/enter/about-enter

[56] Council of Europe. *Enter! Long-Term Training Course 2017-2018.* https://www.coe.int/en/web/enter/lttc-2017-2018

A Council Conclusion specifically on the education and training of youth workers was published in late 2019,[57] inviting Member States to support the development of quality youth work at local, regional, national and European level, including training for youth workers.

The Youth Partnership has resulted in enormous knowledge growth and produced a pan-European overview in the shape of a publication on mapping the educational and career paths of youth workers and exploring youth worker competences.[58] The RAY Network,[59] too, has focussed on competence development and capacity building of youth workers in research conducted under the Erasmus+ YiA[60] programme.

Volunteer Youth Workers

There is little research on volunteers and volunteering (numbers, roles, added value, etc.) and there is a gap in policymaking regarding volunteer youth workers. Below are some of the aspects that have been achieved in the last five years.

Working with young people: the value of youth work in the European Union[61] was published by the European Commission in 2014. It is a general report on the state of youth work in the European Union and acknowledges the role of volunteer youth workers. It is estimated that in a large portion of the European Union (not the whole of the EU) there are 1.7 million youth workers, most of them volunteers.

In some countries, paying youth workers is becoming more established, in part because of the qualifications required. In other countries, volunteer youth workers are more common. However, it is important to recognise that even though volunteer youth workers may not have the same qualifications as their paid counterparts still maintain a professional approach to their work.

The Council of Europe's Programming Committee on Youth[62] requested the European Youth Foundation[63] to monitor the time given by volunteer to youth work through EYF-

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[57] European Union. (2019). Draft conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on education and training of youth workers. https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13595-2019-INIT/en/pdf

[58] Kiilakoski, T. *Youth Workers Educational Paths.Mapping the Educational and Career Paths of Youth Workers Part II. Diversity of Practice Architectures.* EU-CoE Youth Partnership. https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47262613/02-138018_partII-SCRIB.pdf/c35f1d87-b007-6cdb-24a9-825d6c57605f

[59] The RAY Network is a self-governed European research network that contributes to a better understanding of international youth work and learning mobility. https://www.researchyouth.net/

[60] Bammer, D., Karsten, A., Pitschmann, A., and Roth, C, L. (2019). *Competence development and capacity building of youth workers and youth leaders.* Generation and Educational Science Institute. Vienna. https://www.researchyouth.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/RAY-CAP_Final-Research-Report_20191108.pdf

[61] European Commission. (2014). *Working with young people: the value of youth work in the European Union.* https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/youth/library/study/youth-work-report_en.pdf

[62] The Programming Committee on Youth consists of eight government representatives and eight non-governmental youth organisations. It establishes and monitors the programme of the European Youth Foundation and the European Youth Centres (Strasbourg and Budapest). It takes the decisions on all applications submitted to the EYF as well as on the study sessions organised in cooperation with the European Youth Centres. https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/programming-committee

[63] The European Youth Foundation is a fund established in 1972 by the Council of Europe to provide financial and educational support for European youth activities. https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-youth-foundation

funded activities under a scheme known as Volunteer Time Recognition[64] (VTR). Since March 2018 VTR has been integrated into EYF grants. The EYF is the first European structure of its kind to officially acknowledge the work of young volunteers in its grant system.

It is just as important to support youth workers (regardless of status) as it is to support young people. In too many situations the number of youth workers, especially volunteers, fluctuates heavily because they lack appropriate support and recognition of what they do and do a difficult job. In areas such as quality, innovation and recognition of youth work there needs to be a particular focus on volunteer youth workers as they are key to the development of youth work. For development and training the report states that capacity building needs to be constantly available to all youth workers, be they paid or unpaid. Training needs to be available at all levels, from topic-specific training to PhD level.

Participation

Participation – along with youth work's educative, empowering, expressive and inclusive characteristics - is one of the core principles in and of youth work. The scope of participation has broadened significantly in recent years, as proven by a number of publications and projects that cover different aspects of participation but all have participation as their core.

Aware and Active[65] was a strategic long-term project of National Agencies to promote respect for European values, open-minded societies and social inclusion through civic participation of young people, including refugees, migrants and asylum seekers. *New and innovative forms of youth participation in decision-making processes*[66] is a publication by the Council of Europe that explores not only new approaches but also the contributions youth work can make here. *Long-Term Effects of Erasmus+: Youth in Action*[67] was produced by the RAY Network and explores how Erasmus+ YiA projects contribute to the development of participation and citizenship competence and practice. The *Study on the Impact of the Internet and Social Media on Youth Participation and Youth Work*[68]by the European Commission explores over 50 examples of good practice and 12 specific case studies. A participation strategy that was developed within the network of NAs and SALTO Resource Centres of Erasmus+ YiA strengthens the participative aspect of programme implementation and governance. It is intended to adapt to the *Council Conclusions on young people and democracy aiming at fostering*

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[64] Council of Europe. *Volunteer Time Recognition in Projects Supported by the European Youth Foundation.* https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-youth-foundation/volunteer-time-recognition

[65] Aware and Active. http://www.awareandactive.eu/

[66] Crowley, A. and Moxon, D. (2017). *New and innovative forms of youth participation in decision-making processes.* Council of Europe. Strasbourg. https://rm.coe.int/new-and-innovative-forms-of-youth-participation-in-decision-making-pro/1680759e6a

[67] Bárta, O., Fennes, H. and Gadinger, S. (2019). *Long-term Effects of Erasmus+ Youth in Action on Participation and Citizenship.* RAY-Network. https://www.researchyouth.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/RAY-LTE-final-transnational-report_20190923.pdf

[68] Theben, A. et al. (2018). *Study on the Impact of the Internet and Social Media on Youth Participation and Youth Work.* https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/b7fbaf6c-5e36-11e8-ab9c-01aa75ed71a1

democratic awareness and democratic engagement among young people in Europe in November 2020.

The Council of Europe's Youth Department runs a training seminar entitled *Together Have Your Say! "50-50" training-seminar for specialists from national and local authorities.*[69] The "50-50" model evokes the spirit of co-management[70] in place in the Council of Europe youth sector and stresses the necessity for cooperation between public authorities and organisations representing young people. The course focuses on ways to increase youth participation based on the principles of the *Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life*[71] and the manual *Have Your Say!*[72]

Citizenship

The EU Youth Strategy 2019 to 2027 "fosters youth participation in democratic life; it also supports social and civic engagement and aims to ensure that all young people have the necessary resources to take part in society." It is foreseen that through its 11 European Youth Goals, the strategy will help give young people a stronger voice and actively engage them in youth affairs at the EU level as well as at national, regional and local levels. This is emphasised in the "Engage" part of the Strategy, which is aimed at engaging young people in civic, economic, social, cultural and political participation. The Strategy calls on the Member States and the European Commission to promote and work with this through a number of actions.

The Council of Europe takes a rights-based approach to strengthen young people and their role in society. The 2016 *Recommendation on young people's access to rights CM/Rec (2016)7*[73] works towards this goal, highlighting the important role youth work has in ensuring young people's access to rights and supporting young people in being active citizens. It also emphasises that youth workers need to be informed and trained about the rights of young people. Together with ERYICA,[74] the Council of Europe has produced a toolkit entitled *Young people's access to rights through youth information and counselling*.[75]

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[69] Council of Europe. *Together Have Your Say! "50-50" training-seminar.* https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/50-50-ts-ukraine

[70] Council of Europe's Co-Management system. The ground-breaking co-management system is a living example of participatory democracy. It is a place for common reflection and co-production, combining the voice of young Europeans and that of public authorities responsible for youth issues, leading to a sharing and evaluation of experience. Thanks to this dialogue, where each party has an equal say, ideas and experiences can be exchanged, in a spirit of mutual understanding and respect, giving legitimacy to the Joint Council on Youth's decisions. https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/co-management

[71] Council of Europe. (2015). Revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life. https://rm.coe.int/168071b4d6

[72] Council of Europe. (2015). *Have Your Say!* Council of Europe Publishing. Strasbourg. https://rm.coe.int/16807023e0

[73] Council of Europe. (2016). *Recommendation on young people's access to rights.* https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/-/recommendation-on-young-people-s-access-to-rights

[74] European Youth Information and Counselling Agency (ERYICA) is an independent European organisation, composed of national and regional youth information coordination bodies and networks. https://www.eryica.org/

[75] Council of Europe. (2015). *Young people's access to rights through youth information and counselling.* Council of Europe Publishing. Strasbourg. https://rm.coe.int/16807023d9

As mentioned in the previous cluster on "Participation", the RAY Network's research on the long-term effects of Erasmus+ YiA has contributed to an understanding of the development of citizenship as well participation among young people as a result of their engagement in Erasmus+ YiA. With funding from Horizon 2020 research has been conducted on the engagement of urban youth (*Engaging urban youth: community, citizenship, and democracy*)[76] to explore the concepts of community, citizenship, and democracy. The research highlights that many young people on the margins of society are increasingly disengaged from civic and political life. The EU Youth Report 2015[77] highlighted many of the barriers young people face in becoming active citizens and how youth policies need to respond in order to change this in the coming years.

The debate about the practice, impact and future role of European youth work in promoting the democratic values and active citizenship of young people in Europe picked up more speed after the conference *Speak UP! Step UP!*[78] that was organised by JUGEND für Europa in cooperation with other National Agencies in 2017. The conference produced a discussion paper entitled *What's politics got to do with it?*[79] which argues why European youth work needs to pay more explicit attention to the politically sensitive issues of today and that taking a more principled stance on political and social developments in Europe is a necessity for the youth work community of practice. A *European symposium on the development of critical youth citizenship* is intended to trigger further constructive discourse, generate momentum and provide a platform to reconfirm the role of the political dimension in youth work. It aims to achieve this by promoting the development of active, critical citizenship and democratic awareness among young people as a fundamental part of youth work.

Inclusion and Diversity

While inclusion is a topic that will always be important in youth work, the developments over the last five years have been significant. The *Council of Europe Recommendation on access of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights CM/Rec (2015)3*[80] recognises the role of youth work and non-formal education in preventing discrimination and ensuring access to social rights for young people. The report *ENTER! Access to Social Rights for Young People from Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods*,[81] which

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[76] Chaskin, R, J., McGregor, C., and Brady, B. (2018) *Engaging urban youth: community, citizenship and democracy.* UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, National University of Ireland Galway. https://aran.library.nuigalway.ie/bitstream/handle/10379/10016/Engaging-Urban-Youth-Final-Report_WEB.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

[77] European Union. (2016). *EU Youth Report 2015.* https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/youth/library/reports/youth-report-2015_en.pdf

[78] JUGEND für Europa. (2017). The starting point: The European conference 'Speak UP! Step UP! European youth work empowering young people's democratic values & active citizenship'. https://www.jugendfuereuropa.de/ueber-jfe/projekte/critical-youth-citizenship/

[79] Ohana, J. (2020) *What's politics got to do with it.* https://www.jugendfuereuropa.de/ueber-jfe/publikationen/what-s-politics-got-to-do-with-it.4143/

[80] Council of Europe. (2015). *Access of young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods to social rights.* https://rm.coe.int/168066671e

[81] Ramberg, I. (2015). *ENTER! Access to Social Rights for Young People from Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods.* Council of Europe. Strasbourg. https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/-/enter-access-to-social-rights-for-young-people-from-disadvantaged-neighbourhoods?inheritRedirect=true

was published in 2015 based on the previous *ENTER! project* (2009 to 2012)[82] and the above-mentioned Recommendation, aims to develop youth work and youth policy responses to exclusion, discrimination and violence affecting young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The new Council of Europe's Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion 2020-2025[83] focuses at combating anti-Gypsyism and discrimination and aims to support equality. All of these publications have had a strong influence on many youth organisations in their work with young people and has supported organisations in developing inclusion and diversity strategies. The *Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on youth work CM/Rec (2017)4*[84] also explicitly asks the governments of member States to strengthen, among other things, the social inclusion of young people, especially those who are at risk or are marginalised.

In the context of the EU, inclusion of young people facing access barriers or having fewer opportunities in education and training is a key objective of the Commission's initiative towards a European Education Area[85] as well as of the EU Youth strategy and the European Youth Goals.

Erasmus+ YiA and later on also the European Solidarity Corps have promoted this agenda among applicant organisations through the introduction and implementation of the *Inclusion and Diversity Strategy*.[86] The Strategy not only encourages an inclusive approach targeting young people with fewer opportunities, but also supports youth organisations to design their projects in an inclusive way so that all young people can benefit from youth work. The SALTO Resource Centre on Inclusion and Diversity and the National Agencies support the implementation of the Strategy within both EU youth programmes.

While these efforts have had a positive impact of the inclusive nature of EU youth programmes, there is also recognition of the difficulties many young people, especially those with fewer opportunities, face in taking part. The *Combined evaluation of Erasmus+ and predecessor programmes*[87] published by the European Commission in 2017 revealed that over 30% of young people participating in the non-formal learning youth activities of Erasmus+ have fewer opportunities. For the whole of the Erasmus+ programme, the evaluation acknowledges the gap between the programme's aims and the reality, although the programme is clearly oriented towards hard-to-reach young people and specific disadvantaged groups.

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[82] Council of Europe. *ENTER! Access to Social Rights for Young People.* https://www.coe.int/en/web/enter/home

[83] Council of Europe. (2020). *Council of Europe Strategic Action Plan for Roma and Traveller Inclusion (2020- 2025).* https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=0900001680998933.

[84] Council of Europe. (2015). *Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on youth work.* https://rm.coe.int/1680717e78

[85] See the new communication on the European Education Area, which was published 30 September 2020, here: https://ec.europa.eu/education/education-in-the-eu/european-education-area_en.

[86] European Commission. (2014). *Erasmus+ Inclusion and Diversity Strategy in the field of Youth.* https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/youth/library/reports/inclusion-diversity-strategy_en.pdf

[87] European Commission. (2017). *Combined evaluation of Erasmus+ and predecessor programmes.* https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/erasmus-plus/eval/icf-volume1-main-report.pdf

A new Inclusion and Diversity Strategy is under development for the new EU youth programme generation that will cover all Erasmus+ sectors and the European Solidarity Corps and mainstream relevant achievements in the youth work field in other sectors, too. This shows that youth work with its extensive experience in taking an inclusive and diversity-oriented approach has much to offer.

Transition from Education to Employment

The *European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2014-2015*[88] focused on the contribution of youth work in addressing the challenges young people are facing, especially in the transition from education to employment. A Council Conclusion in 2017 entitled *The role of youth work in supporting young people's development of essential life skills that facilitate their successful transition to adulthood, active citizenship and working life*[89] highlighted how effective youth work can result in positive outcomes for young people. This was seen as being due to youth work promoting skills development and positive social values, behaviours and attitudes, encouraging creativity and innovation, and promoting democratic values.

The RAY Network conducted two pieces of research in 2017 and 2018, the first on Erasmus+ YiA's positive long-term effects on project participants and project leaders,[90] the second on competence development and capacity building among youth workers as a result of Erasmus+ YiA.[91] The RAY Network monitors Erasmus+ YiA to chart its impact on young people, youth workers and youth organisations. The large number of activities and results in connection with projects funded by the EU youth programmes and the European Youth Foundation have contributed to an increase in competence development with a specific impact on employment perspectives. Research has shown the positive impact of non-formal education activities on subsequent educational and professional pathways.[92]

The European Youth Forum's report on the first two years of the *Youth Guarantee*[93] [94] highlights the difficulties in attracting young people, especially harder-to-reach and disadvantaged young people, to this programme. It recommends better-quality

[88] European Union. (2014). *Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2014-2015.* https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A42014Y0614%2802%29

[89] European Union. (2017). *Council Conclusions on the role of youth work in supporting young people's development of essential life skills that facilitate their successful transition to adulthood, active citizenship and working life.* https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52017XG0615(01)

[90] Bárta, O., Fennes, H. and Gadinger, S. (2019). *Long-term Effects of Erasmus+ Youth in Action on Participation and Citizenship.* RAY-Network. https://www.researchyouth.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/RAY-LTE-final-transnational-report_20190923.pdf

[91] RAY-CAP. (2019). *Competence development and capacity building of youth workers and youth leaders.* Generation and Educational Science Institute. Vienna. https://www.researchyouth.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/RAY-CAP_Final-Research-Report_20191108.pdf

[92] Böhler, J. et al. (2020). *Effects and Outcomes of the Erasmus+ Youth in Action Programme from the Perspective of Project Participants and Project Leaders.* Generation and Educational Science Institute. Vienna. https://www.researchyouth.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/RAY-MON_Research-Report_20200401.pdf

[93] European Youth Forum. (2013). *A European Youth Guarantee will help young people.* https://www.youthforum.org/european-youth-guarantee-will-help-young-people

[94] European Youth Forum. (2015). *Two Years After: The Implementation of the Youth Guarantee.* https://www.youthforum.org/sites/default/files/publication-pdfs/Position-paper_youth-guarantee-implementation.pdf

schemes with workable long-term solutions for young people as well as better cooperation between stakeholders in various sectors. Strengthening the Youth Guarantee is on also the agenda of Germany's EU Council Presidency.[95]

Migration and Refugees

The topic of migration and refugees is not a new one in youth work. Migration has always been a part of human history, and youth work despite its short history has been one of the sectors to support new arrivals. However, around 2015 the issue took on a wider relevance, with the European Union making it a priority area for Erasmus+ YiA, although it has moved down the agenda somewhat in the face of other, more recent crises.

The Youth Partnership's publication *Between insecurity and hope: Reflections on youth work with young refugees*[96] provides information from refugees themselves about the issues they face in their host communities and examines the role of youth work from a cross-sectoral perspective. A European Union Expert group created a practical toolbox entitled *The contribution of youth work in the context of migration and refugee matters*[97] offering guidance and practical tools for youth workers and youth organisations working with migrants and refugees as well as recommendations for policymakers, based on existing successful practices.

The Council of Europe *Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on supporting young refugees in transition to adulthood: CM/Rec(2019)4*[98] recognises the importance of youth work in supporting the inclusion of young refugees, especially adolescent refugees transitioning to adulthood. In 2018 the CoE's Youth Department launched the project *Youth. Together*[99] on the social inclusion of young refugees to address the risks of social exclusion and violence to which young refugees, especially those in transition to adulthood, are exposed. The centrepiece of the project was a long-term training course for youth workers and young refugees working in reception and hosting centres or other social and educational facilities for young refugees.

Extremism and Violent Radicalisation

The European Union's Paris *Declaration on Promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education*[100] promotes citizenship, centring on preventing the marginalisation of young people by tackling

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[95] Together for Europe's recovery - Programme for Germany's Presidency of the Council of the European Union. https://www.eu2020.de/blob/2360248/e0312c50f910931819ab67f630d15b2f/06-30-pdf-programm-en-data.pdf

[96] Pisani, M. et al. (2018). *Between insecurity and hope. Reflections on youth work with young refugees.* EU-CoE Youth Partnership. https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/between-insecurity-and-hope

[97] European Commission. (2019). *The Contribution of Youth Work in the Context of Migration and Refugee Matters.* https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/1bcaf566-6a29-11e9-9f05-01aa75ed71a1

[98] Council of Europe. (2019). *Supporting young refugees in transition to adulthood.* Council of Europe. Strasbourg. https://rm.coe.int/recommendation-cm-2019-4-supporting-young-refugees-transition-adulthoo/168098e814

[99] Council of Europe. (2010). *Youth. Together.* https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth-peace-dialogue/youth.together

[100] European Union. (2015). *Declaration on Promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education.* https://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/education/news/2015/documents/citizenship-education-declaration_en.pdf

intolerance, racism and radicalisation. The *European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2016 to 2018*[101] also focussed on preventing marginalisation and violent radicalisation.

The European Union's publication *The contribution of youth work to preventing marginalisation and violent radicalisation*[102] details the findings of an expert group of policy makers, researchers and practitioners. It provides a practical toolbox on dealing with propaganda, prevention of radicalism and violent extremism among youth, and lists policy recommendations for public authorities.

To help youth workers to understand radicalisation better, four SALTO Resource Centres together with several National Agencies of Erasmus+ YiA and the Youth Partnership created a project[103] that produced a seminar and a conference on the subject of youth work and violent radicalisation. The project also published a research report[104] and a toolkit titled *Youth Work against Violent Radicalisation and Extremism*.[105] A steering group of five National Agencies created the *Youth in Europe Offenburg Talks*[106] in 2018, which has since become an annual event. In 2019 the theme was *Nationalism, Populism & Far-Right Ideologies among Young People and the Role of Youth Work*. The expert workshops explored the rise in popularity among young people of right-wing ideologies, neo-conservative convictions and traditionalistic beliefs, and discussed the neglect of the European values of democracy, pluralism and human rights.

There are a number of other events, research, meetings and papers on these subjects, including a European conference in Tallinn in October 2019 which explored the role and potential of youth work for mainstreaming human rights education;[107] the revised second edition of the Council of Europe's education pack on non-formal intercultural education;[108] and the final evaluation conference of the Council of Europe's No Hate Speech Movement[109] youth campaign that ended in 2018. Although human rights education, intercultural education and the No Hate Speech Movement all cover much more than extremism and violent radicalisation, the engagement of youth work in these areas and its use of these resources is an important contribution to tackling these issues.

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[101] European Union. (2016). *EU 2016-2018 Work Plan for Youth.* https://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/EN/150403_1

[102] European Commission. (2017). *The contribution of youth work to preventing marginalisation and violent radicalisation.* Luxembourg Publication Office.
https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/0ad09926-a8b1-11e7-837e-01aa75ed71a1

[103] SALTO-YOUTH. *About the Project "Youth Work against Violent Radicalisation and Extremism"*
https://www.salto-youth.net/about/regionalcooperation/current/againstviolentradicalisation/about-project/

[104] García López, M. Pašić, L. (2018). *Youth Work Against Violent Radicalisation Theory, Concepts and Primary Prevention in Practice.* EU-CoE Youth Partnership. https://www.salto-youth.net/about/regionalcooperation/current/againstviolentradicalisation/research/

[105] SALTO-YOUTH. *Tool Kit on Youth Work Against Violent Radicalisation and Extremism.*
https://www.salto-youth.net/about/regionalcooperation/current/againstviolentradicalisation/toolkit/

[106] JUGEND für Europa. *Youth in Europe. Offenburg Talks.* https://www.jugendfuereuropa.de/ueber-jfe/projekte/YouthInEurope-OffenburgTalks/

[107] Human Rights Education Conference. *Youth for Human Rights: The Role and Potential of Youth Work for Human Rights Education Mainstreaming.* https://noored.ee/human-rights-conference/programme/

[108] Council of Europe. (2016). *Education Pack: All Different All Equal.* https://rm.coe.int/1680700aac

[109] Council of Europe. *No Hate Speech Youth Campaign. Final Evaluation Conference.* https://www.coe.int/en/web/no-hate-campaign/final-evaluation-conference-is-this-it-

Innovation

The term "innovation" has become more and more common in the last years and has moved into the spotlight especially through promotion in Erasmus+ YiA, with many projects across Europe specifically focusing on innovation. The introduction of Key Action 2 during the 2014 to 2020 programme provided the first specific funding format with innovation as a focus.

While innovation is a cluster topic in its own right, many aspects of it can be seen as cross-cutting so they are present in most if not all the other cluster topics.

Innovation includes new approaches in youth work, innovation in youth work, new and innovative forms of youth participation, reaching out to new target groups through innovative approaches, and youth work and entrepreneurial learning. These key areas are all mentioned in European-level reports or Council Conclusions.

The European Academy on Youth Work (EAYW) was established in 2019 by seven National Agencies, the SALTO Resource Centres and the Youth Partnership to support innovation in youth work and youth work policy and to promote the development of quality youth work.[110] The first EAYW examined the demands of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention. Due to the success and strong relevance of this format for in dealing with innovation at a high professional level, it is to become a regular event, with the 2nd European Academy on Youth Work planned for 2021.

One of the Conclusions of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States concerned *promoting new approaches in youth work to uncover and develop the potential of young people*.[111] It recognised the potential of young people and pushed for youth work to be adaptable to new topics and challenges, especially developments in society.

The 2018 *Council Recommendation on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning* is linked to the transversal aspect of innovation. The new developments in the Key Competences were designed so that training providers (among others) could promote innovative learning approaches for competence development. The Recommendation emphasises the development of entrepreneurial attitudes and innovation-oriented mindsets.

One of the aims of the European Youth Work Agenda is to support youth work to react to emerging challenges and be able to innovate practice to meet the above needs.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, youth work is indeed responding moment by moment to an emerging (and now ongoing) challenge through innovative practice. Many youth organisations have transformed in-person youth work into online activities involving both groups and individuals. Organisations are exploring and trying out various digital tools, apps and social media programmes so they can maintain contact with and to

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[110] European Academy on Youth Work. *Impressions and Resources of the 1st EAYW*. https://www.eayw.net/impressions/

[111] European Union. (2016). Conclusions of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States on promoting new approaches in youth work to uncover and develop the potential of young people. https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52016XG1215%2802%29

continue to support the young people they work with. The Youth Department of the Council of Europe has taken several steps including digitalising a number of activities in their manuals including Compass, now called *Digital Compass*,[112] and the EYF has issued a special call for grant applications for pilot responses to local needs arising from the pandemic.[113]

How fast the sector has adapted to this crisis is revealed by RAY-COR, a research project in June 2020 by the RAY network on the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on youth work in Europe.[114] [115]

The youth sector as a whole has moved conferences, meetings and mobility activities online to continue supporting youth work in general and maintain European spaces for innovative and strategic developments, policies and practices, so that experimenting with and harvesting of innovative approaches can continue.

Digitalisation

Digitalisation is one of the most prominent areas of development in European youth work. Although the topic has been present for many years before the Covid-19 pandemic, it was still relatively new to many in the sector as an aspect of youth work development on the European level. Much of the material related to this cluster topic was produced between 2017 and 2020. Although young people and the digital world have been rapidly evolving together for over a decade, with only a few exceptions the youth sector has been slow to respond to and embrace this societal development before it was forced to. The pandemic has been as a strong catalyst for rapid digitalisation in the area of youth work. 93% of respondents to a recent RAY COR survey said they had transferred some or all of their youth work activities online n direct response to the lockdown.[116]

Pre-Corona, there were policy recommendations and Council Conclusions, conferences and reports on digitalisation including a report from an expert group, *Developing digital youth work*,[117] with policy recommendations for training and good practice examples for youth workers and decision-makers on developing digital youth work. Among the main outcomes were a working definition of "digital youth work" and examples of innovative practices.

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[112] Not published at time of writing

[113] Council of Europe. *Young People and Government Representatives Working Together to Mitigate COVID-19 Effects.* https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/covid-19

[114] Böhler, J., Karsten, A. and Pitschmann, A. (2020). Youth Work and the Corona Pandemic in Europe. Generation and Educational Science Institute, Vienna. https://www.researchyouth.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/RAY-COR_Policy-Brief-September_20200915.pdf

[115] RAY-COR. (2020). Research Project on the Impact of the Corona Pandemic on Youth Work In Europe. https://www.researchyouth.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/RAY-COR_Initial-Survey_Key-Findings_20200814.pdf

[116] ibid.

[117] European Commission. (2018). *Developing Digital Youth Work.* Luxembourg Publications Office. https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/f01e8eee-07cb-11e8-b8f5-01aa75ed71a1/language-en

The *Council Conclusions on Smart Youth Work*[118] define smart youth work as the innovative development of youth work encompassing digital youth work practice, and including a research, quality and policy component. They also recognise that technological developments are an excellent opportunity for the youth work community to empower young people through advice and information to employment opportunities.

A number of conferences took place in early 2020, including in Luxembourg, *Youth Work in the Digital Era*,[119] in Austria, *Exploring the Digital Dimension of Youth Workers' Competences*,[120] and an online conference originally planned in Germany, *Move It - Youth Mobility in the Digital Era*.[121]

The European Youth Forum's *Pineapple Report*[122] describes young people in Europe as facing the fourth industrial revolution. It urges to ensure that young people are protected and empowered so they can access the rights, opportunities and tools they need to reach their potential as global citizens. It puts forward a range of proposals on how policymakers, institutions and society at large can support young people in the digital era.

Environmental Sustainability

While sustainability became a key youth issue internationally for many young people between late 2018 and 2020, notably through the youth-led movement *Fridays for Future*,[123] it is not nearly as evident in the youth work sector at European level. Even the EU Youth Strategy for 2019-2027 makes no specific mention of young people and their role in combating climate change.

In November 2019 a Council debate took place on a discussion paper initiated by the Finnish EU Council Presidency entitled *A vision for youth work in Europe – climate change, young people and youth work*.[124] The surveys leading up to the debate showed that young people want environmental protection and tackling climate change to be high priorities for the European Union. The discussion paper stresses that youth work needs to respond to issues including young people's climate change needs, desires and varied opinions, and promote critical thinking and human rights. The paper also mentions the need for appropriate training and education for youth workers so they

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[118] European Union. (2017). *Council Conclusions on Smart Youth Work.* https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017XG1207(01)&from=EN

[119] SALTO-YOUTH. (2020). *Conference: Youth Work in the Digital Era.* Anefore asbl. https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/european-training-calendar/training/conference-youth-work-in-the-digital-era.8125/

[120] SALTO-YOUTH. (2020). *Conference: Exploring the Digital Dimension of Youth Workers Competences.* IZ - Verein zur Förderung von Vielfalt, Dialog und Bildung https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/european-training-calendar/training/exploring-the-digital-dimension-of-youth-workers-competences.8255/

[121] SALTO-YOUTH. (2020). *Online Event: Move It - Youth Mobility in the Digital Era.* JUGEND für Europa, European Solidarity Corps, Finnish National Agency for Education. https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/european-training-calendar/training/move-it-youth-mobility-in-the-digital-era-online-event.8749/

[122] European Youth Forum. (2019). *The Pineapple Report.* https://www.youthforum.org/new-pineapple-report

[123] Fridays for Future. https://fridaysforfuture.org/

[124] European Union. (2019). *A vision for youth work in Europe – climate change, young people and youth work.* https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-13398-2019-INIT/en/pdf

can respond effectively to young people on this subject. It suggests that the youth sector could learn from these youth movements that are neither structured organisations nor were initially youth work-led, and yet have mobilised so many young people to become active in their communities and at the political level.

Two key youth information services, ERYICA and Eurodesk,[125] explore the role of youth work in the climate emergency with their 2020 publication *Greening youth information services*.[126]

At the beginning of 2020 the European Commission adopted its *2020 Work Programme*,[127] one of the key aspects of which is linked to sustainability and a recognition of the role of young people and youth work in this area. Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, has mentioned environmental sustainability being a generational issue as well as the need to be committed to the European Green Deal.

In March 2020, an *Introductory briefing paper on effective measures to 'green' Erasmus+, Creative Europe and European Solidarity Corps*[128] was published with the view to exploring how these programmes can address environmental challenges. The paper highlights that all these programmes lack reference to environmental goals and climate action – although since 2020, Erasmus+ YiA has designated this area a horizontal priority. By contrast, it is noted that a significant number of funded projects do tackle these issues.

Youth Information

In 2017 Eurodesk published the results of their survey *Mobility and the role of youth information*,[129] with the second edition[130] following in 2019. The first report focussed on the level of access young people had to information about mobility opportunities and tracked their preferences in looking for, receiving and engaging with information. The second explored how young people find and digest youth information about mobility opportunities and identified what stakeholders can do to reach out more effectively to young people.

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[125] Eurodesk is an international non-profit association, it acts as a support organisation to the Erasmus+ Youth in Action programme, making information on learning mobility understandable and accessible to young people and those who work with them. www.eurodesk.eu

[126] Reina, E., Frith, A., Sabuni, S. and Simon, I. (2020). *Greening youth information services.* ERYICA and Eurodesk. https://eurodesk.eu/green-publication/

[127] European Commission. (2020). 2020 Commission Work Programme. https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2020-commission-work-programme-key-documents_en

[128] Buiskool, B-J. and Hudepohl, M. (2020). *Introductory briefing paper on effective measures to 'green' Erasmus+.* Creative Europe and European Solidarity Corps. https://research4committees.blog/2020/05/06/introductory-briefing-paper-on-effective-measures-to-green-erasmus-creative-europe-and-european-solidarity-corps/

[129] Eurodesk. (2018). *Eurodesk Survey 2017 Report about Mobility and Role of Youth Information.* https://eurodesk.eu/2018/02/09/eurodesk-survey-2017-report-about-mobility/

[130] Sabuni, S. (2019). *Survey 2019 Mobility and the Role of Youth Information.* Eurodesk. https://eurodesk.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/ED-SURVEY-2019.pdf

In 2018 ERYICA launched its six-year strategic plan[131] with four strategic directions: Capacity building; Research, trends and innovations; Quality and youth information ethics; and Policy advocacy and Cooperation.

The place of youth work within youth policy

Youth policy and youth work policy are transversal and are addressed both directly and indirectly in all of the clusters.

The Council of Europe's *Recommendation on youth work CM/Rec(2017)4* opened up a dedicated debate about "youth work policy"; previously, in much of the sector it was habitual to simply refer to "youth policy" because it covered everything. While youth policy does cover all aspects of young people's lives, many aspects may not be related directly to the youth work. Youth work policy directs the spotlight at the recognition and practice of youth work and youth workers. It is not a case of one or the other; instead, there is a need for youth policy to make strategic space for youth work policy within it, in the same way that formal education, youth employment, and social work have their place in youth policy.

On the European level, policymaking guides youth work practice in individual countries, especially in those where youth work still does not exist or is not recognised as a profession. Specific policy developments focussed on youth work support these advancements.

The first European pilot training course *Lobbying for youth work*[132] by the German National Agency took place from January 2019 to June 2020. The aim was to highlight the political significance of youth work and encourage the youth work community to have a louder voice in youth policy.

The European Youth Forum produced a *Toolkit on Quality Standards for Youth Policy*[133] to assist youth organisations in better understanding youth policies that affect them. It also proposes eight quality standards for measuring the quality of youth policies.

The Youth Partnership's *Youth Policy Essentials*[134] is a guide to understanding youth policies and how they can enable young people to be active citizens. It provides an overview of the main concepts, principles and challenges of youth policies. The Youth Partnership also developed the publication *Needles in haystacks. Finding a way forward*

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[131] ERYICA. (2018). *ERYICA Strategy 2018-2023.* https://www.eryica.org/news/2018/5/23/eryica-adopts-a-new-strategy-2018-2023

[132] SALTO-YOUTH. (2020). Lobbying for youth work. JUGEND für Europa. https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/european-training-calendar/training/lobbying-for-youth-work-european-advanced-training.7651/

[133] European Youth Forum. (2016). *A Toolkit on Quality Standards for Youth Policy.* https://www.youthforum.org/toolkit-quality-standards-youth-policy#:~:text=Welcome%20to%20this%20toolkit%20on,regional%2C%20local%2C%20or%20European.

[134] EU-CoE Youth Partnership. (2019). *Youth Policy Essentials.* https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47261953/Youth+Policy+Essentials+-updated.pdf/92d6c20f-8cba-205f-0e53-14e16d69e561

for cross-sectoral youth policy,[135] a series of examples of cross-sectoral youth policymaking to promote an understanding of what it is and how to be part of the process.

The Council of Europe's *Self-assessment tool for youth policy*[136] is a basis for supporting youth policy development and helps member States to assess themselves against the Council of Europe's standards for youth policy. An online training course on *Advocacy for Human Rights Education*[137] took place in 2020 to develop learners' capacities to advocate for human rights education with and by young people at local and national level, and to help participants develop the knowledge and capacity to design and implement targeted advocacy strategies or projects for human rights education notably in the education, youth policy/work and human rights fields.

Funding Programmes and Mobility

The five-year period under review here saw the integration of the former Youth in Action programme into the overall Erasmus+ programme. Erasmus+ now has a separate chapter for youth mobility activities with a separate budget line accounting for 10% of the programme's entire budget. The specific identity and objectives of the youth chapter of Erasmus+ serves as a clear impetus for the youth field to fully engage in the programme. Even with just 10% of the budget, youth activities account for more than 25% of all participants in the entire programme. The integration increased the relative weighting of the youth field and its activities in overall EU policy on formal, non-formal and informal learning.

The period under review also saw the transition from European Voluntary Service (EVS) to the European Solidarity Corps (ESC).[138] An impact study[139] on transnational volunteering under the EVS showed a measurable impact of the EVS on volunteers' learning and competence development. More than 80% of respondents considered EVS to have been helpful for their professional future. The ESC continues the legacy of EVS in that it creates opportunities for young people to volunteer or work in projects in their home countries or abroad, albeit now with a stronger focus on the benefit to the communities they are placed in. The increased significance of solidarity through the establishment of the ESC was accompanied by a project and study by the SALTO European Solidarity Corps Resource Centre that aimed to find a common narrative on

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[135] Nico, M. and Taru, M. (2017). *Needles in haystacks. Finding a way forward for cross-sectoral youth policy.* EU-CoE Youth Partnership. https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/needles-in-haystacks

[136] Council of Europe. (2018). *Self-assessment tool for youth policy.* https://rm.coe.int/self-assessment-tool-for-youth-policy-english/16808d76c5

[137] Council of Europe. (2020). *Online Course on Advocacy for Human Rights Education Training Course Gathered a High Number of Participants!* https://www.coe.int/en/web/youth/-/online-course-on-advocacy-for-human-rights-education-training-course-gathered-a-high-number-of-participants-

[138] European Union. (2018). *Laying Down the Legal Framework of the European Solidarity Corps.* https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32018R1475&from=EN

[139] European Commission. (2017). *Study on the Impact of Transnational Volunteering Through the European Voluntary Service.*
https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/01a810b3-3712-11e7-a08e-01aa75ed71a1/language-en

the concept of solidarity from research, practice, policy and young people. Its outcomes are detailed in the publication *4Thought for Solidarity*.[140]

The *Council conclusions on the role of youth in addressing the demographic challenges within the European Union*[141] notes the double-edged sword that is youth mobility. Demographic challenges, especially in rural areas in some countries, include ageing populations and instability in the wake of recent financial and economic crises. Many factors, high unemployment being one, are driving young people to take advantage of mobility opportunities and leave their homes to study or find work abroad. However, the conclusions also recognise the importance of youth mobility especially when it comes to promoting mutual understanding. It equips young people with the knowledge, skills and attitudes they need to better understand diversity and promotes active citizenship, solidarity, rights and responsibilities - and therefore provides strong support for European identities and values. Finally, the conclusions also note that mobility has a significant impact on young people's personal and professional development.

The EYF follows the Council of Europe's main policy lines, which are revised every two years. In this way, it has become a key instrument to ensure the voices of young people are heard and that they are enabled to take part in decision-making. Particular attention in the last five years has been given to certain issues which embody the values of the Council of Europe, allowing the EYF to position itself as a major force behind the promotion of peace, mutual understanding and respect.

The RAY Network (among others) has been monitoring and evaluating the Erasmus+ YiA for many years. In 2020 the RAY-MON research report[142] was published, the second objective of which was to explore the levels of access to Erasmus+ YiA for young people, especially those with fewer opportunities. The findings suggest that many do face difficulties, especially due to health problems, lack of financial resources, or their belonging to a disadvantaged group. However, 62% of project leaders involved in various forms of youth mobility stated that young people with fewer opportunities did participate in their activities.

The report also acknowledges that the closing of one programme (2014 to 2020) and the opening of the next generation programme (2021 to 2027) has had an impact on the sector.

The research-based proven potential of youth work can only be realised if adequate financial provisions are made for youth work at all levels.

NOTE: At the time of writing, the Covid-19 pandemic has already had an impact on local and national government budgets that is foreseen to grow in 2020 and beyond.

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[140] Baclija Knoch, S. and Nicodemi, S. (2020) *4Thought for Solidarity.* https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-4056/4TDS%20Summary.pdf

[141] European Union. (2018). *Council conclusions on the role of youth in addressing the demographic challenges within the European Union.* https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/4bed304e-6af4-11e8-9483-01aa75ed71a1

[142] Meyers, C., Mayerl, M. and Fennes, H. (2020). Exploring Inclusion in Erasmus+ Youth in Action: Effects of Social Inequalities on Learning Outcomes. https://www.researchyouth.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/RAY_inclusion_summary-20200924_layout_24092020.pdf

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The danger here is that youth work is often the first field whose budget is cut when there are economic downturns. The 2020 pandemic has already impacted youth work to the core; the financial effects for a majority of youth work organisations are severe.[143] There is a recognition among the youth work community of practice of the need for the field to maintain diverse institutions and structures at all levels through appropriate mechanisms and financial resources.

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[143] Böhler, J., Karsten, A. and Pitschmann, A. (2020). Youth work and the Corona pandemic in Europe. Generation and Educational Science Institute, Vienna. https://www.researchyouth.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/RAY-COR_Policy-Brief-September_20200915.pdf

4. Development

This chapter explores some of the challenges to ongoing developments and seeks to identify some of the success factors that have led to said developments. Awareness of these challenges and success factors can support the youth work field in better understanding why and how many of the cluster topics have achieved what they have. This can support the youth work community of practice in planning and moving forward into the future and ensure ongoing developments in all areas of youth work.

Exploring the Challenges to Development

There are numerous challenges to development in youth work. Some are clear and easy to identify, sometimes easy to tackle; however, many are less obvious and not easy to tackle. The following challenges have been identified through the work of the ESG for the EYWA/EYWC, the analytical papers by Howard Williamson[144] and the German Youth Institute,[145] with contributions from additional workshops and working group meetings with various members of the ESG.

Delayed Response

Emerging trends, new developments or sudden crises are always difficult to respond to. Sometimes a response requires research to better understand the issue and sometimes it simply needs the will. While parts of the youth work sector are ready to react and respond and adapt as required to a given situation or crisis, others are slow or even reluctant to respond.

Digitalisation is an example of something that has had an ever stronger presence in the lives of young people for over a decade. Many in the sector have resisted exploring this subject and adapting accordingly. While a number of representatives of the sector have indeed responded to the issue and pushed ahead with developments for many years, it is only in the last two years that digitalisation has been recognised as a priority by the sector as a whole.

Focus on Current Issues

Too much focus on current issues can mean that not enough attention and energy are given to more traditional topics that have been around for a long time. Just because they are not currently a priority does not mean they lack current relevance – they are still needed for good youth work. "Old topics" do not lose importance; they are still relevant or they would no longer exist at all. The topics that have been around for years need to be seen from new perspectives, examining what has changed or what is new or what can be a new and innovative approach.

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[144] Williamson, H. (2020). Cornerstone Challenges for European Youth Work and Youth Work in Europe - Making the Connections and Bridging the Gaps. https://www.eywc2020.eu/en/convention/resources/

[145] German Youth Institute. (2020). The European Discussion on Youth Work 2015-2020. https://www.eywc2020.eu/en/convention/resources/

For example, advice- and information-oriented youth services are a key part of the youth work sector in many areas across Europe. These services are immensely valuable to young people, especially as they transition from adolescence into adulthood. This particular aspect of youth work has not been a political or funding "priority" for some time.

By contrast, the Covid-19 pandemic has started to dominate youth work in terms of research, policies, time and effort. Many are concerned that as a sector we need to keep a balanced perspective and not let this topic take over to the extent that other areas are ignored. This trend towards "current issue focus" has been around almost since the beginning of youth work. Either a trend is forced onto the sector or the sector embraces the trend. Recent examples include employment, refugees and immigration, and radicalisation, to name but a few.

Shrinking Spaces

Another of the challenges affecting civil society in general is that of shrinking spaces. Youth work is particularly vulnerable to this, with spaces often one of the first items to be eliminated because of lack of resources or an "unfriendly" environment. As these spaces shrink, so does youth work itself, be it a daily youth club meeting because the building is closed down or its use is restricted, or youth research organisations being squeezed out of funding streams, or youth work policymakers no longer being invited to participate and have a voice in (local) government decision-making.

Many governments in Europe do not view civil society as a priority and in some instances even see it as a threat. The youth sector in general and youth work specifically is one of the easier targets within civil society. Many countries are seeing budget cuts, closure of physical spaces and a suspension of policies in favour of youth work. In some cases, policymaking favours a client-based approach, with many aspects of youth work outsourced to private companies. Several governments around Europe are taking advantage of the pandemic to attack civil society in general by cutting funding and/or physically closing spaces.

Resources

In the context of calling for a European Youth Work Agenda, the sector stated a need for financial investment in youth work at all levels. It was proposed that there should be sufficient funding provided for youth work in all countries, however in many debates following the 2nd European Youth Work Convention it was also been pointed out that "sufficient" is an unknown quantity. If further financial investment is being sought, the sector needs to be specific in what it is asking for. Also, while increased financial resources are welcome, they should not be seen as the answer to all of youth work's problems. Flooding the sector with money will not necessarily lead to higher-quality youth work. The challenge here is to identify what further funding or resources are needed and what for. Innovative and experimental youth work developments? Youth initiatives? Consolidation of existing practice? Structural funds for established youth work organisations or cross-sectoral developments?

This is also about the sector working with the limited resources it has and making full use of them without necessarily being better equipped. There is a need for further development of existing and new structures to support youth work development. Youth work needs sustainable structures and capacity building in regard to both human and financial resources. In the light of the current crisis, there is a clear need to ensuring the actual existence of youth work.

Intra-Sectoral and Cross-Sectoral Communication

In this age of access to information and digitalisation, communication should be the one thing that is easy to maintain on a regular basis. This general area is framed here as a challenge yet it also appears as a success factor (see below).

Communication, internal or external, is not always a strong point in the youth work sector. One of the reasons is that many in the sector are constantly busy; youth workers, policy makers, National Agencies, the institutions. Communication often falls by the wayside. Internally, while there are communication tools and platforms, too often too many in the sector fail to use them. Also, some tools are out of date or of poor quality.

External communication is also quite poor in many instances. A classic issue is the difficulty many face in explaining to friends or family what they actually do. Another is that many local and national governments want proof that youth work is cost-effective. Although this specific issue is more than just a communication problem, it is still an issue that the sector has to come to terms with by communicating adequately how much work is being done, making sure policymakers are aware of the success stories, and ensuring that youth projects are regularly covered by local news outlets.

There is also time it takes to receive and give information. Many don't have the time or the willingness to create space for reading, analysing or checking out what is happening. As with society at large, there is an abundance of information; too much information can feel intimidating and so people do not engage with it. Research has shown that information online can often only be absorbed in small quantities, with people only willing to watch a video or read a document for x number of minutes. Communication patterns at all levels of the sector need to be adapted to the changing needs of individuals.

The Community of Practice

This element is represented as both a challenge and a success. The youth work sector is made up of numerous levels and actors, between whom much of the time there is a lack of cooperation, communication and connection. Whilst much has been achieved through the sector working together, there are still many sticking points. For example: how much are local youth work practitioners aware of the national or international level policies that affect them? Do they know how they could or should be influencing new policies by engaging with researchers? A lack of understanding of the nature of the community of practice is one of the youth work sector's weaknesses.

Cross-Sectoral Connections

Cross-sectoral approaches in the youth sector have been a priority topic for several years, much-discussed at conferences and in numerous papers, reports and publications. For many in the youth work sector, the concept remains elusive – something that sounds like a good idea, but most don't know what to do, which other sector(s) to link up with, or what they would do once linked.

Some parts of the youth sector do pursue cross-sectoral approaches. Such connections between sectors can be extremely fruitful and add value to their work. It is important for the sector to know what other sectors are doing and how they do it. While this is always useful, it can be especially useful in times of crisis. For example, when the schools closed because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the youth work sector could have learned a lot from the online teaching that had to be implemented. At the same time, the formal education sector could have learned a great deal from the youth work sector in regard to online learning methodologies and approaches.

Legal Provisions

Last but not least, legal frameworks can be a challenge to development. In some countries the existing division of youth policy competence between national, regional and local levels is not very helpful. At the European level, competences are restricted, which sometimes hinders further development. Although the legal frameworks around youth work are owed to long tradition, highlighting the enormous impact of them is a challenge for development.

Exploring the Success Factors for Development

While examining the cluster topics in detail, a number of terms or phrases emerge that are universal to most if not all of them. While individual cluster topics can be seen as successful in youth work as well as being factors that bring success to youth work, it is necessary to analyse why this is. The following section examines some key success factors. The list is not complete and not all the areas highlighted are necessarily universal to all cluster topics. However, they are mentioned here because they are key to what is needed for ongoing development. Some elements are also mentioned in the Challenges section; while these are indeed challenges in a general sense, this section points out that where challenges are resolved, they are instrumental in supporting the ongoing developments.

Intra-Sectoral Dialogue

Communication in general (see above) is identified as a challenge, however when it does work, it is a key success factor. Communication appeared time and again in the analysis of the cluster topics. The main point here is that there has to be dialogue between all levels and actors of the youth work community of practice, from locally based youth workers to researchers, policymakers to youth project managers, members of youth councils to politicians, youth worker trainers to the institutions, and so on – and of course vice versa and in multiple combinations.

Communication is greatly enabled by providing spaces for such dialogue in the form of conferences and meetings. Yet while this is important, it needs more than that. It requires the dialogue to continue outside of such events, involving part of the youth work sector who were not present – practitioners, policymakers, youth work managers, researchers, young people, etc.

In more general terms, dialogue also takes place between the international institutional level of youth and youth work organisations and networks, such as the European Youth Forum, the Advisory Council of the Council of Europe, and international youth NGOs with local organisations, as well as between the international, national, regional and local levels.

This interaction creates a more inclusive form of dialogue. It is a key factor that needs to be considered for further ongoing developments.

The Whole Community of Practice

One of the success factors for intra-sectoral dialogue is the awareness of the diversity of actors and levels within the youth work sector. While practitioners, policy makers and researchers enjoy visibility, many other aspects and less visible elements of the sector to be recognised and taken into account, among them youth work managers, policymakers, volunteers, trainers, analysts, project coordinators, different types of youth worker, supporters at the political level, young people, organisations and networks. They form part of the broad spectrum of people and groups that make up the youth work community of practice. Recognising the full extent of who makes the youth work sector what it is and involving different actors at all different levels and with different mandates is what makes development work.

Strategy

There are numerous strategies for many aspects of youth work. Approaches here need to be flexible and they need to be visionary. Strategies also need to have a long-term horizon in order to have an impact. Strategies need to be created at the local, regional, national and European levels and must encompass the entire community of practice; from young people all the way to the top-level policymakers.

The European Youth Work Agenda is a prime example of a strategic framework complementing existing strategies at European level. It is intended to be developed in cooperation with key European stakeholders (the European Union and Council of Europe) and including the entire community of practice. All need to help identify and advance strategies to support ongoing developments in youth work.

However, for many developments there does not seem to be a unified master plan or **common strategy**. Some strategic developments are seen to be driven by dynamics between different actors and activities, processes and structures, each with a different starting point and trajectory. In reality, many connections exist but too often they lack continuity and coordination. Creating spaces for common and individual strategy development are important and something that the sector is building on.

Political Level

Ongoing development requires a supportive political framework, such as the work of the Council of Europe through its Youth Department, and the Committee of Ministers approving Recommendations, and from the European Union the Commission supporting the EU Youth Strategy, the work of the Youth Partnership, individual Governments recognising youth work or member States supporting the Conventions or the EYWA. Dialogue is again a strong feature here, with political support coming through debate and decisions, through the use of existing structures and from sufficient funding available to support the different activities undertaken by political institutions and individuals.

Transfer of Knowledge and Sharing of Information

The transfer or sharing of what is happening and who is doing what is key to fostering ongoing developments. This includes knowledge, expertise, peer learning, skills, understanding, good and bad practices, policies, recommendations, reports, conferences, research, meetings, tools, insights, innovations.

Numerous mapping exercises reveal who is doing what, where and at what level, and there have conferences and meetings to share this knowledge. The youth work sector and its resources extend across numerous levels and actors, from local to international. However, there is still room for improvement. More effective sharing internally would allow for greater and more effective sharing to sectors outside the field, thereby increasing understanding and recognition of what youth work is and does.

Despite the existence of resources, it can be argued that research does not translate effectively enough into policy or policy into practice, and that we are simply producing policies without actually challenging the lack of implementation. Numerous policies are important and necessary, but too often there is either a lack of willingness, professionalism or resources to deliver them.

Understanding the Diversity of Practice

It is necessary to understand the diversity of youth work practice involving young people. There are two broad camps concerning how youth work is perceived in Europe. Some countries/regions see youth work playing out in the context of learning, so non-formal and informal education and learning play a key part in how youth work is practiced. The other camp focusses on young people's personal and social development, where the development of relationships between youth workers and young people takes priority.

Neither model is wrong; in reality, youth work in general embraces both elements. It is rare to find one approach being used to the exclusion of the other. However, youth work practice varies greatly from one country to the next and even within one country - especially countries with a longer tradition of youth work.

It is through youth work practice itself in all its diversity that the needs of young people are identified, and through which the core issues of youth work or the issues the community faces become visible. Many of the cluster topics may feature in youth work

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practice; or an area of practice may be so specific it features only one or two of the clusters. This is the nature of youth work, but it needs to be recognised and understood.

Another aspect is that if development only focuses on one area of youth work or if one cluster topic is given too much attention, others will potentially suffer. While research, policies or strategic developments, etc. often need to be specific to have an impact, the people involved need to have a general understanding of youth work in order to understand the role and impact of that particular development in youth work not just on their specific area, but on but the sector as a whole.

European Dimension

A key success factor in youth work in Europe is that Europe (in its broadest sense) has a European level youth work community of practice. The international programmes offered by the European Union and the Council of Europe provide a unique setting where young people from across the continent can meet; where government ministers can talk and create common ground for youth work; where practitioners, trainers, policymakers, institutional representatives and researchers can gather to explore issues, make decisions, and develop strategies. The European dimension offers a huge benefit and support to the community of practice as a whole.

The European dimension needs to continue going into both directions. It is necessary for local youth work practice to feed into the European level and vice versa. This requires better systems so European impulses can be linked systematically with those at local level.

Analysis and Building of Knowledge

All that is happening in the youth work sector needs analysis. Simply sharing and monitoring will not lead to better quality or enable development. Analysts need to look at what is happening, how it has happened and what further steps are necessary to ensure ongoing developments. The outcomes of this exercise must be shared across the sector in order to be effective. A better understanding of success can lead to more success.

Monitoring

The use of systematic approaches to monitoring youth work at all levels supports development. With monitoring in place, observation of the progress being made in the youth work sector as a whole or in a particular area is more effective. Monitoring allows the systematic collection of information and the tracking of a particular development across the sector.

Conclusion

We need to raise awareness of what we are doing in the youth work community of practice. It is these above-mentioned elements that are behind the ongoing developments of all the cluster topics explored in the first half of this paper. They are what allow ongoing development in youth work:

- The dialogue happening in the spaces
- Generation and sharing of information between all levels and actors of youth work
- A full understanding of the diversity of youth work practice
- Monitoring and analysis of what is happening in society and among young people, as well as in youth work itself
- The strategies being developed to contribute to future development and to respond to crises or needs
- An internal recognition of the work that is being done at all levels and by all actors in youth work and those levels and actors working together
- Political affirmation of what is being done through policy developments
- European-level support through leading, following and connecting

Bringing together all of the discussions and points that were made, it can be concluded that we need to build

"a common knowledge on the reality of youth work through better understanding of the diversity of the community of practice, and transferring it into enhanced, expanded and better-informed debates and practices in youth work (and beyond) and fostering advanced, impactful and supportive policy frameworks / policy making for youth work."[146]

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[146] European Steering Group

5. Outlook

Crisis Response

The Covid-19 pandemic is impacting enormously on the lives of young people everywhere. Youth work organisations and practitioners are working hard to continue working with young people despite distancing and other restrictions. They are also working to meet emerging needs voiced by or identified among young people.

It is also clear that all the cluster topics and ongoing development factors are currently affected to one degree or another by the pandemic. The sector should neither become too focussed on this individual issue nor should it ignore it. A balance needs to be found when addressing the specific impact of the crisis on youth work, while trying to deal with it in the bigger picture of European youth work.

The youth work sector's slowness to respond to digitalisation, its reticence to respond to the Fridays for Future movement and the speed with which it has adapted to the pandemic reveal the different faces of the sector, some of its fragility, and some of its strengths. In all the above scenarios, there is good and poor practice to be learnt from.

Connection to the EYWA

Strategic Framework

The EYWA offers an opportunity to create a strategic framework for youth work so it can react to emerging challenges and innovate practice. Connecting to the success factors, there needs to be dialogue, transfer of information and monitoring and analysis to support innovative development. A strategy needs to be developed so the community can provide a pro-active, not re-active, response to crises and other challenges. The political levels need to support the European dimension so that innovations, developments and challenges can be explored from the local level to the European and vice versa.

Some of the greatest weaknesses in the sector are external. Budgets are quick to be cut and infrastructure removed in times of financial crisis. Decisions are made without talking with the community or practice or young people. Poor or no recognition of youth work in some countries means a lack of support for the work being done. The EYWA as a framework that is intended to be supported by both the European Union and the Council of Europe would mean greater protection for the youth work sector in the face of threats such as budget cuts and infrastructure removal. The EYWA offers a strong response in defence of youth work. It ensures the voices of young people and the sector as a whole are heard and considered during the process. The EYWA specifically affirms how important it is to have a strategic framework for the development of youth work.

Integrated Policy Development

Current strategic developments at the European level prepare the ground for many of the cluster topics and ongoing development success factors, especially in relation to linking them to youth policies.

The EYWA affirms developments in continued policy development and implementation in many areas, including the establishment and strengthening of legal frameworks, developments in the training and education of youth workers, better availability of resources, recognition of youth organisations as key instruments in competence development and social inclusion, and developments in youth information services, to name but a few.

Such a framework is important in that it will support the development and implementation of policies in a more unified and coherent way - from local to national to international levels.

Expanding Youth Work Provision

The EYWA can support advocacy for a Europe-wide youth work provision which is available for all young people. This links to the success factor "diversity of practice". Youth work employs a broad spectrum of approaches when working with young people face to face. Developing a greater understanding of the diversity of practice and expanding this diversity to different parts of the community of practice can enrich its ability to reach out to many young people who are still out of reach.

Strengthening Common Ground

It is important to strengthen the common ground of youth work, especially through cooperation between different institutions and actors and between different levels and with other sectors. The EYWA can promote the inclusion of all sub-sectors in strategy development. It is too easy to simply focus on youth workers, policymakers and researchers when in reality the sector consists of many more stakeholder groups. In many ways, internal recognition of all those who make up the youth work sector is just as important as gaining external recognition. Without the full acknowledgement of all the human resources that make up the community of practice, development is limited.

Supporting Quality Youth Work

The EYWA allows for greater intra-sectoral cooperation highlighting the importance of the transfer and sharing of information. There is also a need for increased monitoring and the analysis of the youth work being carried out, research being done, policies being developed and so on. If this were put in place, more quality youth work would be possible.

The EYWA can support further development of quality youth work by building on the sector's existing strengths. Some strategies are already in place, such as the European Training Strategy. However, more cooperation between the different parts of the sector would be an asset here, especially when it comes to recognising and understanding the training opportunities on offer.

Enhancing the Promotion and Recognition of Youth Work

The EYWA also intends to enhance and promote the recognition of youth work. Strategy development, the internal recognition of the sub-sectors and intra-sectoral cooperation

would improve recognition of the diversity of practice in the sector. This would help to promote youth work at the European level and in member States.

Final Remark

Thanks to the analysis this paper provides, it is easier to recognise and understand ongoing and upcoming developments, structural challenges and success factors. On the one hand, the EYWA is intended to serve as a framework for the general development of youth work in Europe by supporting and developing the success factors. On the other, it can act as a catalyst for the development of the specific topics of youth work practice across Europe.

The EYWA and the EYWC are ideal opportunities to focus on the following two areas:
- - Strengthening the framework conditions for youth work and thus improving the external factors
- - Raising awareness of and strengthening the factors that can boost developments in specific areas: an enhanced understanding of the community of practice as a whole, more shared strategic approaches and political support, more intra-sectoral dialogue, better knowledge transfer and sharing information; a better understanding of the diversity of practice, more analysis and monitoring, and the added value of a strengthened European dimension.

This is a great window of opportunity which should be made use of by the community of practice in a joined spirit.