



Professional Open Youth Work Declaration of Principles

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Professional Open Youth Work in Europe



Mapping Professional Open Youth Work in Europe

Ten partners from various realities (grass root youth work, umbrella organisations, formal education) and nine European countries committed to a Strategic Partnership to draw a clearer picture of what we mean by professional open youth work in Europe. The project highlighted effects and values of this field of action and produced with LOGBOOK a new platform for information, exchange of knowledge and debate. Another important outcome is this Declaration of Principles of Professional Open Youth Work that gives an insight in a common definition and basic principles.

Introduction

There have been various attempts at finding common ground on youth work in Europe. Studies from 2009 and 2013 as well as the two European Youth Work Conventions (2010 and 2015) highlighted differences and worked on finding common ground. These exercises were often inclusive, trying to cover the whole range of different youth work practices. Still, they also motivated specific forms of youth work to develop their own clear profile and thus a common voice and impact on European Level. Consequently, professionals working with young people in an open youth work setting aimed at mapping their profession by creating a common definition and a set of working principles that could serve the field as reference point.

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Definition

Professional Open Youth Work is a profession that is practised by trained and educated workers who commit to codes of ethic and quality standards and are paid for their work. It is a practice of non-formal and informal learning. It is offered on a universal basis and open for all young people who voluntarily choose to participate. It is based on pedagogical concepts that aim to raise the emancipation and empowerment of young people as well as their critical awareness. Professional Open Youth Work fosters the ability to critically evaluate one's own individual situation in relation to others and society, applying a variety of methods aimed at the young peoples' personal and social development and social inclusion, hence empowering them for social change. It especially seeks to support and empower young people that are in a marginalized or vulnerable situation. Its approach is holistic and inclusive of young people, focusing on their talents, potentials and interests, seeing them as an asset and not as a deficit. It provides for a professional stable relationship between young people and youth workers that is based on dialogue and which is not judgemental. It seeks to create a sense of belonging and strengthens resilience in young people. Offers are co-created with the young people, with support from the youth worker. It actively advocates and promotes the interests of young people at all relevant levels.

Professional Open Youth Work

- creates a safe space* where young people can experiment, associate, meet peers and grow as an individual in a positive and supportive environment.
- provides experiences and activities that foster the acquisition of new skills and competences, broaden horizons and contribute to their personal development.
- creates a stable, respectful and meaningful relationship, based on dialogue and complementary to other relationships such as family, friends, school and work.
- creates opportunities for young people to make positive experiences and supports their participation in their local community and the wider society for empowering them.
- raises the social and (inter-)cultural skills and competences of young people and thus fosters their inclusion in society.
- applies a holistic approach in all its interactions with young people and supports them during periods of transition, especially during their adolescent years.
- reaches out to all young people including those not actively attending youth work offers and fosters good relations with all other groups present in the community.

*safe space

A physical, temporal, digital or emotional space in which young people can interact with their peers and with youth workers in a positive and secure environment.

PRINCIPLES

PROFESSIONAL OPEN YOUTH WORK...





Erasmus+

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