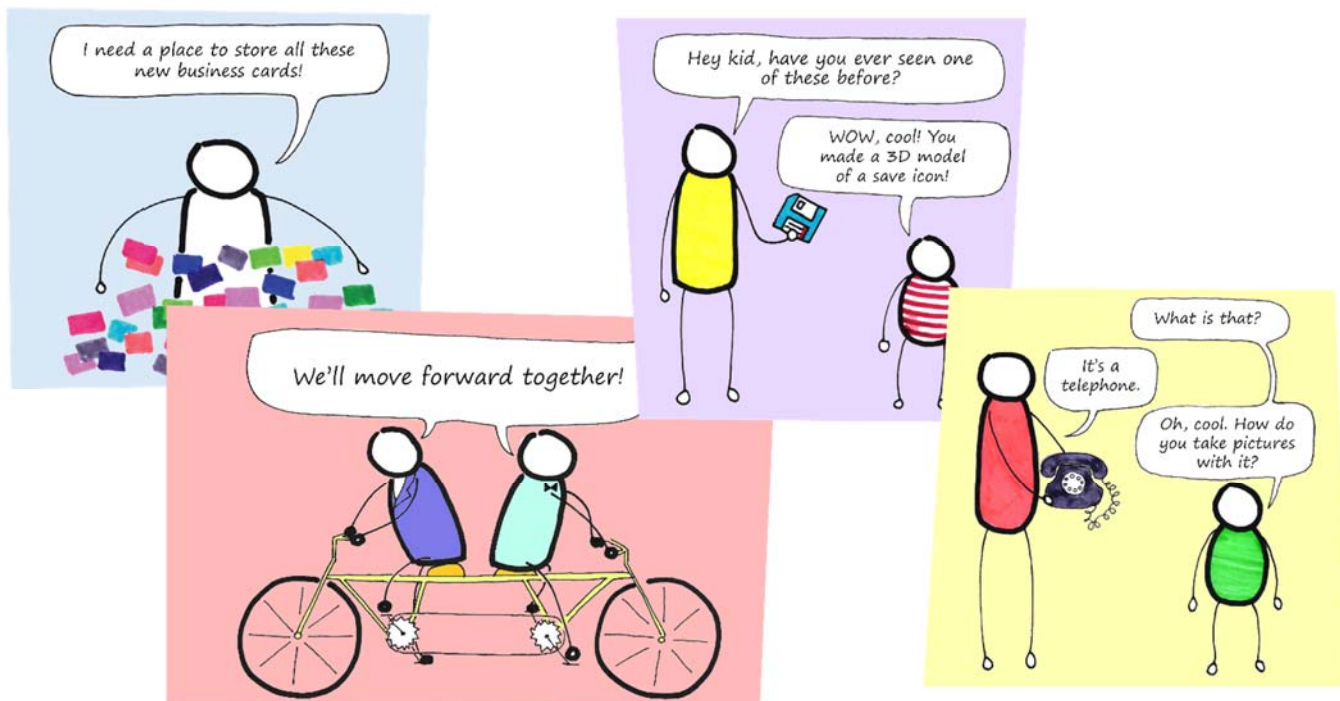


# Intellectual Output 1 - Research on youth work in Croatia, Italy, Latvia and Lithuania

## National Report Template (Italy)

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## Introduction

The organization responsible for the research is EGIInA Srls (EUROPEAN GRANTS INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY S.R.L.S). EGIInA Srls is a private consultancy and training agency, operating in the field of EU projects and grants. The company has been founded by a team of project managers with long-term experience in the preparation, submission and implementation of project proposals, as well as in the coordination of international partnerships and the administrative and financial management of actions at local, national and EU level. Overtime, the Italian organization has conducted several socio-economical researches in different fields and – as in this case – it made use of expert researchers.

Within the Youth Work HD project, the gathering of information took place in three phases, using different methodologies: a desk research, an online questionnaire and focus groups.

Specifically, the desk research selected online publications and videos, which could be considered as valuable resources for the activities of all who work with and for youths. This has also allowed identifying some platforms in which it is possible to enroll in online courses and gather useful information about different institutional and non-institutional entities dedicated to youth-addressed social and educational animation.

Through the online questionnaire, youth workers were listened, asking them to evaluate their own preparation on certain skills, which are considered crucial for activities with youths. In addition to evaluation, the questionnaire meant to gather information about the chosen training approaches, the satisfaction level for online courses and the features that a platform dedicated to the activity of youth workers should have to be attractive and useful.

After the distribution of the questionnaire, four focus groups took place to examine the results of the previous research phases. We asked our privileged witnesses to discuss different subjects: the identity of a youth worker (Who? Which skills? What knowledge?); the need to train all who work for and with youths, as well as the competences that should be enhanced; the satisfaction about a specific online training and the limits and potentials of a methodology based on an e-learning platform; the preferences in terms of functionality, procedure and contents that an online course should have.

In Italy, more than eighty youth workers were reached through the online questionnaire, operating in many different fields; twenty privileged witnesses were listened through focus groups, among which: Public officers, Communication Experts, Expert Youth Workers, Start-uppers, Business representatives, Experts in policy influence, Youngsters, Digital/social innovators, ICT experts, Web Marketing experts.

A due introduction for the reader. What is written in this report is a presentation of what resulted from listening to everyone who offered their precious testimony. In the description of the results, we have often decided to use their own words, reported between commas in the following text.

## The current situation of Youth Work

### *A thoughtful scenario of local/national Youth Work*

In Italy, there is not a definition of youth work and not even a clear definition of “young people”. According to the interviewees the situation described in the report on Socio-Economic Value of Youth Work (2006) is still true today:

*“There are no national laws regarding both youth work and young persons. All the laws dealing with this issue, both at national and regional level, have different concepts of what “young people” are. Each of these laws considers different age ranges to identify the target, depending on the issue dealt with. Some define young people as persons between the ages of 15 and 29, others define them as being between 15 and 36, etc.”<sup>1</sup>*

Who is a youth worker? There are several professional approaches of “being” with young people, as well as the variety of actors involved and the visible trends. A due introduction: providing an exhaustive answer to the opening question would be a not satisfactory attempt. Based on the results from the focus groups and online questionnaire conducted within the project, the youth workers is an “extremely transversal and polyhedric figure”, operating in different fields. He/she is involved in social and educative activities, sometimes even doing this “unknowingly”, in order to enhance the social participation and the development of talents in youths and their local communities. He/she is involved in the development of activities to prevent hardships, facilitate inclusion, participation and involvement with the aim to stimulate expressivity, communication and participation, thus contributing to the improvement of life quality. He/she cooperates in cultural and recreative activities planning, organization and management, through direct interaction with youths. Actions are often set within a wider course, carried out through teamwork, in which other operators appear, like vocational trainers, psychologists, intercultural mediators, social caregivers, trainers. Through sports, theatre, games, hands-on activities, music and much more, the youth worker develops community life activities, both occasional and permanent, with prevention, education and social integration finalities. The youth worker is able to identify and enhance the resources of individuals and teams; stimulate and encourage their participation; plan, organize and implement activities; give directions to youths. His/her intervention is based on informal and non-formal learning procedures.

There is not a univocal definition of youth work in Europe, but certainly this profile has the fundamental trait to focus on youths, their personal development and willful participation. Social and educative animation belongs to the out-of-school education sector. Youth animation involving activities with and for youths can contribute to the development of autonomy, creativity, social participation, willful involvement, active citizenship and integration. It can achieve many results, but it needs crucial transversal

<sup>1</sup> European Commission, February 2014, Directorate-General for Education and Culture, *Working with young people: the value of youth work in the EU – Country Report: Italy* © European Union, 2014, NC-04-14-173-EN-N, ISBN: 978-92-79-367-197-5, doi: 10.2766/7275 ([http://www.youthpolicy.org/library/wp-content/uploads/library/2014\\_EU\\_Youth\\_Work\\_Study\\_Country\\_Report\\_Italy.pdf](http://www.youthpolicy.org/library/wp-content/uploads/library/2014_EU_Youth_Work_Study_Country_Report_Italy.pdf))

competencies revolving around communication, listening skills, negotiations and conflict management.

The youth worker “lives through young people”, meaning that he/she knows them, their way of being, their language and the tools they use, more and more web-based.

The youth worker is required to be flexible, open minded, receptive to changes, new ideas and generally new experiences.

It is necessary to be aware of the local resources, to understand the environment within which the youth moves his/her steps in order to identify the existing opportunities.

So, let's try again: who is a youth worker? An “advisor”, a “hinge”, a “motivator”, a “person who listens to you and is ready to help you”, “a capable person”, “a hybrid figure” ... these are some of the definitions expressed by our privileged witnesses to try and give an identity to the presently discussed profile.

From the online research that took place in Italy (82 participants), the average youth worker is 34 years old and owns a medium-high instruction level, being professionally active in several fields involving youths. Among the four main competences, the one believed to be crucial is *Reaching out to young people*, getting in contact with them. It follows *Cooperation with relevant stakeholders*, establishing relationships with all the actors directly and indirectly working with youths.

In Italy, interviewed people feel prepared enough and, should they enroll in an online training course, they would like to have it as an advanced training. Evaluating themselves, the aspects in which they feel “less strong” are those regarding:

- a) “Strategic analysis of stakeholders’ priorities and expectations, including the legal and administrative framework, as well as their relevance to the youths and community development”.
- b) “Open digital content production and digital creativeness”.

More than half of those who filled the questionnaire had an online course experience; many pointed out that they prefer a mixed training offer, in which group meetings with the trainer would be expected (blended learning). They wish for an interactive platform opening the way to new forms of cooperation.

As we'll be able to detail in the following sessions, great part of the online-gathered informations were confirmed during the group discussion with our privileged witnesses.

### *Cooperation with relevant stakeholder*

All of our interlocutors agree on the fact that the youth worker should “know the reality in which the youths live”. Without knowing the territory, how is it possible to involve actors directly or indirectly working and/or involved with the youth world? To help youths, it is necessary to have the skill of “territory-reading”, identifying its potentials – in the sense of evaluating the existing resources or those to be developed – and criticalities.

The youth worker should “know how to manage the network” with all those stakeholders in the territory operating with youths. It should move easily and rapidly, know “the referential people”, “the local services”, “the activities addressed to youths”. To manage the network, “a constant interaction is necessary” (...) otherwise relationships fail and “the network falls”: “it’s necessary that the network is kept alive!”

It’s not easy to do so, and one of the results of the online questionnaire - concerning “Strategic analysis of stakeholders’ priorities and expectations, included the legal and administrative framework, as well as their relevance to the youths and community development”- is that the self-evaluation of the people interviewed is under what was crosschecked for other specific competences. Before establishing a strategy, it’s necessary to analyze what exists, the background and the expectations.

Other important competences emerged from the focus: “know how to communicate”, “know how to manage difficulties”, “the problem solving approach”, “being flexible” and the “teamwork skill”.

Some of the participants in the focus group used Massive Online Open Courses (MOOC). They were generally satisfied with the offer received. The most valued features were: the fact that “the use of the platform was simple”, with “sufficiently simple modules”. During the course, it was possible to “monitor their own learning level”. The learning evaluation appears as a crucial element.

“A possible digital incompetence of the youth workers is immediately observed by the youths, who burden the operator with this gap of competences in the use of the most renowned digital tools, sometimes compromising their credibility during the implementation of the activities”.

Always according to our privileged witnesses, if the online training is a good way of learning, face-to-face meetings are also important.

For the online training, we could think about “attractive and entertaining videos”. Surely, the one requested is a “quality training” which allows to have a certification. About the user-friendliness, the importance of accessing the platform through the most famous social networks (i.e. Facebook) was underlined, to be favored over any dedicated Apps, which could make the use of the platform less immediate. The main difficulty highlighted was how to structure a course suited to the many different fields in which the youth animator worker and to the different targets. The themes and approaches change following the situations of social, cultural and educative needs of the community to deal with.

The training program should include “both theoretical and practical subjects”, thus contributing to prepare professionals able to connect theory to practice.

The OERs selected for the field of “Cooperation with relevant stakeholders” are:

- [“Guide for mentors of Young Migrants”](#), A guide for mentors engaged in the professional inclusion of Third Country nationals in Europe CESIE
- [“Guidelines for intercultural education”](#), a handbook aimed at educators to teach them knowledge and implementation of intercultural education.
- [“Professional competences in the role of the social educator”](#), conceptual platform that gives indications for the development of the social educator profile.
- [“Youth policy – A guide for educators”](#), a guide prepared to facilitate the work of the educator on youth policy issues.

**The composition and the characteristics of the participants at the focus group was**

	Type of participant	Gender	Age	Main field of work	Type of organization	Age-range of youths (only for YWs)
1	Public officer	F	40-49	Social policy	Municipality	12-30
2	Business representative	F	30-39	Service to enterprises	Trade association - Consultancy	17-30
3	Start-upper	M	18-29	Agriculture	Farm	26-30
4	Expert Youth Worker	F	30-39	Culture and heritage; environment	Cooperative	12-30
5	Expert Youth Worker	M	18-29	Healthcare	Cooperative	21-30

*Policy impact/influence*

The youth worker should “know how to guide”: “youths are disoriented nowadays; the orientation of our youths is a real need”. And this is true “even if they can use and know digital tools better than us”. Youths “don’t know how to look around, they lay down, they become discouraged”. Hence the importance to “read, understand and advise”.

The youth worker should help “youths to research and make them independent”, he/she should “know how to offer keys to the reading, how to read and live the territory”. To do this, it becomes necessary to have a high level of “open-mindedness”, “to know how to welcome different linguistic patterns and models of values without prejudice”. Active listening and entering their thought patterns acquires importance. We could also say – inverting the point of view - that “reflecting about youth workers is something that has to be done by the policy makers, to establish a contact with them”.

Again, the group discussion highlights the importance to know how to analyze the territory, know the people, the existing opportunities. The youth worker could be presented as a “connector of resources”; “he/she should be an expert in territorial strategies, he/she should know how to move”.

The youth worker “should know about youth policy and how to analyze it”, “social and economic dynamics”, he/she should “know how to network, establish a contact and maintain relationships to help the youths”.

An online course should be structured with videos and support materials. Videos could be designed with interventions of experts in the sector, with the support of youth workers operating in different fields, thus obtaining a fruitful contamination. This way, an interdisciplinary dimension would be ensured.

In addition to a peer-to-peer training, it was also proposed to give the word to youths, asking them about the people working with and for them.

The OERs selected for the field of “Policy impact” are:

- ➔ [“The Italian program for Youth Guarantee 2014-2020”](#), this paper illustrates the wide reform in the field of youth guarantee.
- ➔ [“Just – juvenile justice – manual for trainers”](#), guide for organisation of training activities in the juvenile justice system.
- ➔ [“Handbook for Youth participation in local administration”](#), handbook with policy recommendations for the local administrations that want to involve youths in the decision making process.

**The composition and the characteristics of the participants at the focus group was**

	Type of participant	Gender	Age	Main field of work	Type of organization	Age-range of youths (only for YWs)
1	Expert Youth Worker	M	40-49	Employment opportunities; sports	Cooperative	21-30

2	Expert in policy influence	F	40-49	Vocational training	Limited responsibility company	17-30
3	Youth policy makers	M	40-49	Employment opportunities	Job center	17-30
4	Youth policy makers	F	40-49	Healthcare; social care	Umbria Region	17-30



## Reaching out to young people

Reaching young people requires knowing their way of communication and using different channels. Youths constantly experiment new expressive means. A person participating to the focus told us how rap music revealed itself to be an excellent tool “to establish contacts”.

The youth worker should be able to motivate, “focus on the youth’s resources and not make him/her concentrate on his/her limits”. It requires a great empathy and soft skills. “The older” must talk to and listen to “the younger”... “abandoning his/her traditional role”. A space must be given to “emotional components”, and here everything about emotional intelligence plays a role.

Digital tools are important to reach young people and it is necessary to know how to correctly use them. If this is true, here comes – as in all the conducted focus groups – the importance of face-to-face communication.

In this discussion session, another important subject emerged: the intercultural communication skill, based on the knowledge of differences in habits and value systems.

The youth worker should have great listening skills, he/she should know how to understand young people, understanding the youth world and the social dynamics. This is the only way he/she can move knowingly across the reality in which he/she operates.

The youth worker should have “good planning skills, excellent communication and listening skills (...), he/she has to be careful, available and sensitive, with a good level of self-control (...), he/she should know how to encourage interpersonal relationships”.

For the youth worker it is appropriate to arrange a theoretical and practical training course. However, “given that in many cases the person operating in this field is qualified with one or more graduations, he/she is also able to autonomously gather theoretical sources”. Confrontation and exchange is what makes the difference. We could think about a platform where experiences could be exchanged, beyond their application field. It is not said, in fact, that an art activity made with youth through is not useful to take valid inspiration in different domains. By watching videos regarding different experiences (who made it, how and what were the results), the youth worker can learn and work out new ideas. By using the Web, it is also possible to activate a system of relationships and opportunities, a contact space to operate more effectively with young people. Multidisciplinarity – a feature that should characterize the interventions towards young people – can be enhanced by the exchange of information and experiences. “It should be a highly socializing space”. There could also be modules indicating the basic skills a youth worker should have, with interventions by experts in communication, psychology and sociology.

Another important subject is the release of the attendance certificate and also a final evaluation by the trainer, described as “fundamental”, because some professional profiles (i.e. psychologists) involved in youth work require a constant training. An IT platform from which it is possible to release certifications becomes important because it contributes in making online training convenient from a time management point of view.

The OERs selected for the field of “Reaching out to young people” are:

- ⇒ [“Youth initiatives and participation guide coaching”](#), a guide to support autonomy and active participation of young people.
- ⇒ [“Active participation of youth: guidelines for project management”](#), this guide is aimed at orientating the political, methodological and technical choices.
- ⇒ [“Social and work integration of young people through Art and Interculturalism”](#), project aimed at ensuring opportunities for personal and professional development of disadvantaged young people.

**The composition and the characteristics of the participants at the focus group was**

	Type of participant	Gender	Age	Main field of work	Type of organization	Age-range of youths (only for YWs)
1	Expert Youth Workers	F	30-39	Healthcare; education	Cooperative	12-20
2	Expert Youth Workers	F	30-39	Healthcare; education	Cooperative	12-20
3	Youngster	M	12-16		Cooperative	
4	Youngster	M	12-16		Cooperative	
5	Expert in communication	F	40-49	Communication	Freelance professional	21-30

### *Usage/exploitation of digital tools*

“Everything revolves around communication, tools for an effective work with young people have changed”. To reach young people you cannot think of neglecting the actual affirmed digital culture, presenting constantly evolving digital features. Youth workers “should begin to think, design and operate digitally (...) IT has changed the world, the way of living, having relationships, dealing with things. It requires a simple, clear and rapid communication, which sometimes has to be spread through non-conventional channels”. To many young people, virtuality is part of reality.

It is necessary to train youth workers not only in the aware exploitation of new technologies, but also in the correct language to be used. “It’s a use of tools which totally makes the difference between who was born digital and who became so”. An unaware gap between youth workers and young people could emerge, because of the different cultural heritage in which they were born, lived and educated. “The problem is not in young people, the problem is ourselves, the non-digital”. Everything is rapid, young people wish for simple, clear and rapid answers.

The main task of a youth worker is not to transfer contents, his/her knowledge, but to encourage interest, passion, and curiosity, train aware citizens, developing logical, analytical and synthetic skills. If you want to approach young people you must abandon the idea of “being an institution dictating to youth”. “It’s the youth worker who should enter the youth’s rationale and not vice versa”.

Moreover, to “be taken seriously” you should show young people to be better at using tools than them. It is necessary to be “constantly updated” and “be curious to know”, “to be proactive in learning and exploring youth dynamics”. First, it is necessary to be aware and know which digital tools young people make use of.

It is necessary to listen to them, observe them, understand why they do some things, and eventually why one doesn’t have a public Facebook profile: “They make themselves invisible to the eyes of elders, because they want to be invisible, this is not casual”. “One has to know how to use Instagram Stories, Snapchat, so that they could understand the value and potential of these tools”.

There’s one thing that should be taken into account by the youth worker: who is his/her target group? What is the average age of the youths he/she has to interact with? Every age has its way of communicating, and it uses different tools and applications.

There is technical knowledge, the knowledge of different tools and new applications, but there is also a relational part, which involves listening to young people, that appears as crucial.

From the online questionnaire results one can deduce that the youth workers who participated see themselves a bit less capable in the field of “Open digital content production and digital creativeness”. It could be read as an indirect request of training on the important matter of IT-connected Creativity, which is also affecting the area of companies and institutions, appearing as a decisive aspect to establish smart relationships between different stakeholders, and, undoubtedly, it could capture the interest of young people.

“The course has to focus on new digital tools used by young people, but also the modalities to use them have to be new”, meaning that this takes an “immediate didactic usability”.

A training that is visual, rapid, easily accessible and “all-in-one-hand”, that is, through a smartphone.

In addition to the course, it could be interesting to deal with what could emerge from a virtual class of youth workers, who could cooperate and exchange ideas and experiences.

For some topics, the course should be diversified based on the age of young people to be confronted by the youth worker, because sometimes it’s necessary to activate many different approaches.

The youths themselves could be the real trainers about some topics, “meaning that some videos could be created, in which young people address the youth workers”. Moreover, instead of creating totally new modules, it could be useful in some cases to exploit what already exists in the web (certainly copious and high-levelled in many cases). The limit that appeared in open educations resources (i.e. video-lessons conducted by worldwide experts in some cases) is the fact that the beneficiaries’ background is not taken into account; for this reason, these resources should be chosen according to their tasks and to whoever uses them.

For all the participants to our focus group, the course should be blended (both online and with face-to-face training sessions) and – mainly – usable based on what one intends to examine, learn and/or enhance; “structure it on different levels, based on one’s needs”.

Anyway, this requires a high-quality education and reliable mechanics for the certificates of attendance release. The free training proposed by Coursera has been taken as a model.

The OERs selected for the field of “Usage of ICT” are:

- ➔ [“Italia Lavoro ProDigEO. Problem solving: competenze digitali ed imprenditorialità”](#), video uploaded on the mobile learning platform of PRODIGEO aimed at labour market operators trainers.
- ➔ [“Focus on digital animators”](#), a critical view on the experience of digital animators, with useful recommendations.

**The composition and the characteristics of the participants at the focus group was**

	Type of participant	Gender	Age	Main field of work	Type of organization	Age-range of youths (only for YWs)
1	Expert Youth Worker	F	18-29	Culture and Heritage	Cultural organization	12-16; 17-20; 26-30
2	Expert Youth Worker	F	30-39	ICT and Digital	Freelance professional	21-30
3	Digital/social innovator	M	40-49	ICT and Digital;	Consultant; Trainer	26-30

				Music and Arts; Culture and Heritage		
4	ICT expert	M	30-39	ICT and Digital	Company	21-25
5	Expert in web marketing	M	30-39	Strategic consultancy for companies	Company	26-30

## The Youth Work HD eLearning platform

### *Challenges and opportunities for a blended training course for Youth Workers*

The greatest obstacle appeared to be how to structure a course that could be valid to the various fields, in which the youth workers operates, and to the different targets. Themes and approaches vary depending on the situation of social, cultural and educative needs of the target community. Having said this, some of the people we interviewed chose to make use of an online training. A quality offer is required. Generally, we encountered a real interest towards the project, together with the will to establish a platform useful for youth workers. In these terms, always according to the interviewed people, the main features that the Youth Work HD platform should have are:

- ➔ an interactive platform that could make cooperation possible;
- ➔ a highly available course, both in access and use;
- ➔ a course structured in modules, through which one could use trainings according to his own level of education;
- ➔ one's possibility to monitor his own learning level;
- ➔ a video-based training;
- ➔ a rapid training, also with smartphone-accessible learning modules;
- ➔ a final certification, obtained through reliable means of evaluation that could allow its release;
- ➔ the use of existing resources;
- ➔ the possibility to exchange good practices;
- ➔ the creation of virtual classes.

### *Analytical review of European OERs for Youth Workers*

Based on the results of the online survey, select one of the open educational resources identified with the preliminary desk research, which contemporarily meets the following conditions:

- a) Covers the thematic area **for which your organization will be responsible to develop a training module** in the next step of the project implementation, namely
  - ➔ **Langas j ateitj** >>> *Cooperation with relevant stakeholders*
  - ➔ **EGINA** >>> *Policy impact*
  - ➔ **CTK Rijeka** >>> *Reaching out to young people*
  - ➔ **LIKTA** >>> *Usage of ICT tools*
- b) Presents at least three of the most important features identified with the online survey for youth workers:
  - ➔ *it is interactive*
  - ➔ *it is integrated with work you do with youths*
  - ➔ *it is fun and easy to use*

- ➔ it allows collaboration with other participants
- ➔ it is in English and in my mother tongue
- ➔ it provides certificates
- ➔ it includes good practices and references for additional information

Once you have verified the eligibility of a specific OER, proceed with its analytical review and complete the information required in the following table:

<b>Title in English</b>	Local/Regional networks for (meaningful) youth participation – A practical guide for Youth organisations & Youth Workers		
<b>Author/s</b>	Sergio Xavier, Nicola Vendramin and Olga Glumac		
<b>Source</b>	<a href="http://toolbox.salto-youth.net/1374">http://toolbox.salto-youth.net/1374</a>		
<b>Topics covered</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Cooperation with relevant stakeholders-companies, public authorities and other organisations working in youth field <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy impact-examination of policy documents, lobbying on local, national, (pan)European level <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reaching out to young people-targeted promotion, organising volunteering, promoting active citizenship, impact on motivation of young people and working with marginalised groups <input type="checkbox"/> Usage of ICT tools-easier and safer communication, lowering the costs through usage of ICT tools in youth work, open educational resources		
<b>Languages available</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Bulgarian <input type="checkbox"/> Croatian <input type="checkbox"/> Czech <input type="checkbox"/> Danish <input type="checkbox"/> Dutch <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> English <input type="checkbox"/> Estonian <input type="checkbox"/> Finnish	<input type="checkbox"/> French <input type="checkbox"/> German <input type="checkbox"/> Greek <input type="checkbox"/> Hungarian <input type="checkbox"/> Irish <input type="checkbox"/> Italian <input type="checkbox"/> Latvian <input type="checkbox"/> Lithuanian	<input type="checkbox"/> Maltese <input type="checkbox"/> Polish <input type="checkbox"/> Portuguese <input type="checkbox"/> Romanian <input type="checkbox"/> Slovak <input type="checkbox"/> Slovenian <input type="checkbox"/> Spanish <input type="checkbox"/> Swedish

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE OER**  
*Objectives and specific target group*

The aim of this paper is to give a step-by-step pamphlet that could help youth workers to establish a youth network from anew, building a community of youths. The aim is to build thus a network that would be able to have a voice in the community, at local level, and have a say in the local policies and the needs of local societies, especially youth. A local/regional network for (meaningful) youth participation is the name for a instrument/mechanism that provides a stronger voice to a youth community while being a convenient vehicle for this voice to be heard and to have the respective - significant - impact in the target context.

The competences developed by this paper are: project building skills, network building skills and general organizational skills.

### Evaluation of the teaching and learning process

This OER comes in the form of a very practical guide. For this reason, no specific navigational aids or tools are necessary, however, an introduction and index are given at the top of the guide. The language and graphics are appealing and the structure is very logical. The guide's use is to support and teach simple rules to the youth worker that wants to start a networking in the field in order to have a policy impact.

The approach used by this guide is rather learner-centered: it's an attempt to help youth organisations and youth workers in their strategical work, considering that a network is generally a long-term process. It's a very practical approach to networking about, with, and for young people. The guide is given to the student in order to provide him with the tools to apply what has been learned and translate the knowledge into practical actions. However, these actions are in the hands of the student, who is supposed to develop the skills on the contents and practical experiences offered by the guide. The "step-by-step" makes so that the self-assessment is certainly a huge part of it, however there are no specific questionnaires to actually evaluate the results in an objective and interactive manner. For what concerns the tasks and activities, instead, the guide gives very practical examples and guidelines, that have to be put in place. Each step implies tasks and activities to be carried out.

The paper starts with a detailed introduction, which clearly states what the objective of the guide is. The first module starts immediately with a very practical step-by-step approach. The aim is thus clear since the very first pages. During the whole paper, there is no specific reference to the learning outcomes that are expected. Nevertheless, there are clearly learning outcomes gained through the practical experience. The Learning Outcomes will develop through the practical experience, following the steps described by the guide.

There are no specific tools, services or resources that allow the monitoring of the progress, but the paper itself is uploaded on the Salto-Youth platform which offers different tools to deepen what has been learned through the paper and also allows to give some feedback through the comment boxes. Also, the appendix of the paper has an e-mail where to send any specific feedback.



### Evaluation of the information and material content

The guide is authentic and the structure is very precise and logical in its division. The modules are quite short, but the explanation is exhausting and serves well the objective of the guide itself.

The material provided is quite updated, and the steps are all accurately described, with an appendix giving also further suggestions, especially focusing on challenges that may occur. It is equality and equity friendly, it supports social harmony and inclusiveness and it is law abiding. Generally speaking, the aim of the network to be built through the process described by the paper is also focused on social change and development. The guide encourages the learners' input to create localized content. In fact, the aim of the guide is to help learners to build a network by putting in practice the acquired knowledge.

There are no direct references in the paper, but the database on which it is loaded, Salto-Youth, offers many connections and chances to further develop the topic. There is a date of release but no indication for expected revisions.

### Evaluation of the product's presentation and format

The guide is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License. Hence, it is free to be adapted and shared, by giving appropriate credit. A clear reference to the creative commons on the second page, right after the cover. The material and content are easily printable, for it is a PDF that can be downloaded and consulted on any device, given the appropriate reader tool. The accessibility to the paper and the material provided for deepening the knowledge is excellent. This is provided on the paper itself and on the Salto-Youth database, on which you necessarily have to go in order to download the pdf. Furthermore, it is simple to use, clearly designed and graphically appealing.

### Evaluation of the technical system and used technology

As mentioned, this guide is provided as PDF, it is downloadable through the website and it should not be a problem using it across different platforms. For the same reason, and for the nature of the file, adaptation might not be that easy. Nevertheless, the practical experience that could and should ensure the guideline is a practical experience of which the results can easily be presented and are tangible (the forming of a network).

Analytical review of local/national OERs for Youth Workers

Based on the results of the online survey, select one of the open educational resources identified with the preliminary desk research, which contemporarily meets the following conditions:

- c) Covers the thematic area **that has been elected as the most relevant by the respondents in your country**, namely
- ➔ **Langas į ateitį** >>> *Reaching out to young people*
  - ➔ **EGINA** >>> *Reaching out to young people*
  - ➔ **CTK Rijeka** >>> *Reaching out to young people*
  - ➔ **LIKTA** >>> *Cooperation with relevant stakeholders*
- d) Presents at least three of the most important features identified with the online survey for youth workers:
- ➔ *it is interactive*
  - ➔ *it is integrated with work you do with youths*
  - ➔ *it is fun and easy to use*
  - ➔ *it allows collaboration with other participants*
  - ➔ *it is in my mother tongue*
  - ➔ *it provides certificates*
  - ➔ *it includes good practices and references for additional information*

Once you have verified the eligibility of a specific OER, proceed with its analytical review and complete the information required in the following table:

<b>Title in English</b>	The 'Coaching Guide' – Youth Initiatives & Participation
<b>Author/s</b>	Mario d'Agostino, Jochen Butt-Posnik, Milena Butt-Posnik, Pascal Chaumette, Ullly Enn, Heike Horning and Nerijus Kriauciunas.
<b>Source</b>	<a href="#"><i>(Italian Version)</i></a> <a href="#"><i>(general database with different languages)</i></a>
<b>Topics covered</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Cooperation with relevant stakeholders-companies, public authorities and other organisations working in youth field <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Policy impact-examination of policy documents, lobbying on local, national, (pan)European level <input type="checkbox"/> Reaching out to young people-targeted promotion, organising volunteering, promoting active citizenship, impact on motivation of young people and working with marginalised groups <input type="checkbox"/> Usage of ICT tools-easier and safer communication, lowering the costs through usage of ICT tools in youth work, open educational resources

<b>Languages available</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Bulgarian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> French	<input type="checkbox"/> Maltese
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Croatian	<input type="checkbox"/> German	<input type="checkbox"/> Polish
	<input type="checkbox"/> Czech	<input type="checkbox"/> Greek	<input type="checkbox"/> Portuguese
	<input type="checkbox"/> Danish	<input type="checkbox"/> Hungarian	<input type="checkbox"/> Romanian
	<input type="checkbox"/> Dutch	<input type="checkbox"/> Irish	<input type="checkbox"/> Slovak
	<input type="checkbox"/> English	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Italian	<input type="checkbox"/> Slovenian
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Estonian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Latvian	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Spanish
	<input type="checkbox"/> Finnish	<input type="checkbox"/> Lithuanian	<input type="checkbox"/> Swedish

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE OER

#### *Objectives and specific target group*

This OER is based on a very detailed book that attempts to study a common strategy on how to sustain and help youth groups that are realizing or trying to realize initiatives. Hence, the paper has the youth workers as main target. First of all, the book gives a broad framework of the youth policies at national and European level. Then, it goes deeper, by drawing the picture of a “coach” and what role this profile would play in supporting the youth groups. After the whole theoretical framework, many practical examples of good practices are giving and also a suggestion of toolkits is provided for the mentor/coach. It is very practical and useful for a youth worker. To sum up, the book aims to build a profile that could gain the necessary competences to become a coach/mentor for youth groups and initiatives. The main competences developed are: active participation of young people; policy impact examination of policy documents, lobbying on local, national, (pan)European level and cooperation with relevant stakeholders.

The 5 chapters include:

1. Key concepts like Youth Initiatives and Active Participation
2. Perspectives to reflect on the role of a coach and implications of the coaching effects
3. How coaching might be structured and elements and methods within the frame of youth work
4. Different dimensions of participation with some hints and advice to act in concrete situations
5. Examples of Youth Initiatives and related coaching experiences
6. Selection of methods, techniques and instruments to be used when coaching Youth Initiatives.

### Evaluation of the teaching and learning process

The structure of this OER is that of a book, however a very interactive one, it is appealing, it asks constant attention and to carry out activities to be self-assessed with interesting tools afterwards. For these reasons, it is rather learner-centered, since the competences acquired are aimed at a very practical use, after having got them through the reading and analysis of the book. Some self-assessment tools are provided, with a guide on how to use them, the tools to interpret the result of the self-assessment and with solutions provided as well. Also, a creative tool to use in order to assess the practical work with the youth group is given. These tools guide

the youth worker step by step, also providing suggestions for tools to use in the coaching process. The tools are many and connected to specific tasks, they are creative, colorful and easy to use, with step-by-step descriptions always provided. For what concerns the structure, an exhaustive index and preface is given at the beginning of the book, furthermore, colors, pictures, infographics and tables help to get the best from the contents of the book. The introduction is exhaustive and goes directly to the point, it is dedicated to the explanation of the role the coach should play, what the coach is, and what competences are needed in order to be a successful one. The language used is simple and direct, and the whole book is often interrupted by appealing infographics. Yes, an entire chapter is dedicated to this, with the provision of tools for self-assessment on the contents of the book, ongoing assessment of practical results. Also, an email is provided in order to suggest improvements or give feedback.

### Evaluation of the information and material content

This book was realized with the support of the European Commission, the International Office for the French youth community in Belgium and the Polish National Agency of the YOUTH program. It supports equality and equity, promotes social harmony and inclusiveness and it's law abiding and non-discriminatory. It is authentic and internally consistent. In fact, the book is divided in 5 chapters, each with very specific goals and competences assessed. It's exhaustive and quite long, although easy and fast to read.

On the other hand, it doesn't really push to create localized content, not directly at least. However, to put practically in place what has been learned throughout the book might have this result.

Some resources to the general database are offered at the very beginning, and they are all very useful in order to deepen the knowledge given by the present book.

The book was released in its first version in 2006 and revised in 2008, but there is no specific indication on future expected revisions.

### Evaluation of the product's presentation and format

The book doesn't directly state the open license nature, but the platform on which it is loaded clarifies the references to the Erasmus + disclaimer. Generally, the accessibility and potential for the engagement of the user is very high, thanks to the tools that are offered. It is also very appealing in its aspect, for it is very colorful and features several infographics and pictures.

The provided material is printable, downloadable and thus reachable offline and it is mobile friendly, if the device has the proper reader. Since it's a book though, the material is open for reuse but not for adaptation or integration.

An email is provided in order to send some feedback.

### Evaluation of the technical system and used technology

There are no identified metadata tags in the OER's content.

The book is compatible with different platforms and it doesn't require any specific requirement, nor was any problem recorded during the trial. It is downloadable and usable like a regular pdf, so adaptation is no easy, but it is portable and transmissible without any problem. The content created by the learners is practical and in real life, so it can't be used as added material for the e-portfolio.

### *Analytical review of local/national OERs for Youth Workers*

- *Brief overview of methodology implemented for the research of OERs (websites used, key words used, web portals used, etc.)*
- *Number of OERs selected*
- *Nature of the OERs selected (PDF Handbook, Web page, Video, etc.)*
- *Languages (Mother tongue + English, only mother tongue, only English, etc.)*
- *Topics covered (Policy Impact and ICT, only ICT, all of them, two of them, etc.)*
- *Nr. Of "recommended" OERs (recommended/not recommended)*

Several methods were used to identify the already existing Open Educational Resources (OERs) for youth workers. A first research was carried out by key words both in English and Italian, in order to identify the most relevant sources at national, EU and international levels. Websites relating to Italian policy institutions and public administration bodies were analysed, as well as universities' websites, in order to gather reliable and good quality material.

After a general screening on all the information gathered, an in-depth analysis of its content was made, keeping in mind the reliability, suitability and content value of what was found to comply with the purpose of this study.

Based on the research carried out, we selected 17 OERs of different nature: handbooks in PDF format, videos and platforms. These selected materials are available in several languages: Italian, English, Croatian, Estonian, French, Latvian, Spanish.

The selected OERs are the following:

- 1) "Active participation of young people: guidelines design";
- 2) "Everything you always wanted to know about national youth councils";
- 3) "Focus on Digital Animators";
- 4) "Guide for Mentors of Young Migrants. A guide for mentors engaged in the professional inclusion of young Third Country Nationals in Europe";
- 5) "Guidelines for intercultural education – A manual for educators to know and implement intercultural education";
- 6) "Youth Policy Manual: How to Develop a National Youth Strategy";

- 7) "Just – juvenile justice – Manual for trainers";
- 8) "Local/Regional networks for (meaningful) youth participation – A practical guide for Youth organisations & Youth Workers";
- 9) "Manual for youth participation in councils";
- 10) "Italia Lavoro ProDigEO. Problem solving: digital competences and entrepreneurship";
- 11) "Social and work integration of young people through Art and Interculturalism";
- 12) "The contribution of youth work to address the challenges young people are facing, in particular the transition from education to employment";
- 13) "The Italian program on Youth Guarantee 2014-2020"
- 14) "The social educator's professional skills – Conceptual platform" (in Italian);
- 15) "The 'Coaching Guide' – Youth Initiatives & Participation";
- 16) "Youth policies and youth participation: from beneficiaries to actors";
- 17) "Youth policy – A guide for educators".

These OERs cover all the 4 topics: Cooperation with relevant stakeholders; Policy impact; Reaching out to young people, Usage of ICT tools.

All the selected OERs are suitable and recommended.

## CONCLUSIONS

*Brief summary of the report:*

- ➔ *General overview of how the youth work framework looks like in your country (on the basis of what you presented in Vilnius' meeting)*
- ➔ *General overview of the research methodology implemented for the online questionnaire (channels used, people reached, issues, etc.)*
- ➔ *Main conclusions on how the training should look like (based on preferences expressed online and on focus groups)*

In Italy, there is not a definition of "youth work", nor a clear definition of "young people". In fact, there are no Italian laws specifically defining or regulating this field of activity.

This lack of regulation can be primarily due to the unclear concepts of "what young people are" and "who a youth worker is". Thus, no effective and unambiguous definition is available, and this often leads to situations where workers who could be actually defined as "youth workers" do not recognize themselves as belonging to this specific category.

According to the analysis performed within this study, what emerges is that "being a youth worker" implies "being very versatile", and often employed in a variety of fields, making it quite difficult to inscribe this type of expert in a clearly defined category/area.

However, some common traits and characteristics can still be found with respect to youth workers:

- He/she is proactive, flexible and open minded;
- He/she is often involved in cultural activities;
- He/she is a facilitator and a problem-solver;
- He/she is able to support dialogue with and among youths;
- He/she is able to identify the potential of each young, both as individual and as part of a group/team.

Since in Italy there is no specific regulation/law on youth work, likewise there isn't any educational path specifically designed to prepare people to be working with the young. Therefore, youth workers have very varied certificates, university or school degrees. Nevertheless, it is not uncommon to find youth workers who graduated in the humanistic sector.

The quality of youth work is not unlikely to be somehow hindered by this lack of univocal and certain legal/educational framework; thus, it is obvious that this situation could be tackled by achieving the recognition of the formal status of "youth work" and by defining a clear educational/training path for those who are willing to work with the young, also by providing them with a certificate assessing their specific competences in the field.

In order to carry out the online questionnaire survey, more than 80 youth workers/stakeholders were reached by having recourse to contacts database of organizations that have been involved in youth work as well as of adult education and youth centers.

From this activity and from the focus groups, several "good features" emerged with respect to how online training should look like:

- the course should be blended (both online and with face-to-face training sessions) and – mainly – usable based on what one intends to examine, learn and/or enhance;
- it should be interactive and should provide participants the chance to exchange opinions and "connect and cooperate" with other participants;
- it should be easy and simple to use, but, at the same time, it should provide good quality lessons;
- it should give participants an overview on their learning level;
- it should provide a certification;
- it should envisage both theoretical and practical tasks;
- supporting material, such as videos, should be available for all participants.