

EUROPEAN ACADEMY ON YOUTH WORK - WORKSHOP REPORT

Better Together: How a Collaboration Between a National Agency and Higher Education Institute Supported Youth Workers to Integrate Youth Mobility in Youth Work Organisations

Anne Molloy, Leargas - Irish National Agency, and **Hilary Tierney**, Maynooth University Ireland
Contact: amolloy@leargas.ie, Hilary.Tierney@mu.ie

PARTICIPANTS

25 participants from across Europe representing higher education, training and broader youth field

PURPOSE

- Share our learning from designing and implementing the certificate programme and our response to the evaluation findings
- Present insights from how participation in this programme supported youth workers to build capacity in their organisation for international youth mobility
- Share our experience of working together and how it has led to valuable learning, collaboration and a challenging of negative preconceptions of higher education and non-formal education partnerships.

METHODOLOGY

The workshop was divided into three parts as follows:

Part 1: Introduction to session and participants

Part 2: Presentation by Hilary and Anne

- Background of youth work & youth work education in Ireland
- Impetus to design a programme in collaboration – insights from the process
- Discussion of curriculum & assessment design – unique features of the programme
- What youth workers have learned from their involvement in the programme
- Reflections on our collaboration and opportunities for ongoing partnership we have learned from implementing the programme
- Negotiating partnership – a framework for development

Part 3: Questions and Discussion

THIS PROJECT ADDRESSED THE CHALLENGE OF SUPPORTING IN-DEPTH LEARNING ON YOUTH MOBILITIES FOR YOUTH WORKERS IN A WAY THAT WOULD LEAD TO LEARNING AT ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL.

KEY ISSUES RAISED SUCH AS CHALLENGES

This project addressed the challenge of supporting in-depth learning on youth mobilities for youth workers in a way that would lead to learning at organisational level. There are many opportunities for short term trainings for youth workers which support their personal learning, and this project focused on how a longer term training could support the personal learning for youth workers in way that would support them to integrate their learning in their organisations and lead to a more sustainable impact of trainings.

There was also the challenge of increasing the visibility of youth mobility in the youth work sector in Ireland and increasing the professional recognition for youth workers in organising youth mobilities.

INNOVATIVE RESPONSE(S) TO THOSE CHALLENGES

The NUI Certificate in European Youth Mobility Project Management is a strategic response to an identified need to provide more [in depth](#) learning opportunities for youth workers and support them to integrate their learning at an organisational level through the Training and Cooperation Activities (TCA) plan. This is reflected in the recent Research Based Analysis of Youth in Action (RAY) report on the impact of the Erasmus+: Youth in Action programme on youth competences, which highlighted challenges of supporting knowledge transfer at organisational level and also identified the need for more in depth learning opportunities for youth workers.

The project is a collaboration between a Higher Education Institute and National Agency and brings together the academic and practical experience of both partners to develop the NUI Certificate in European Youth Mobility Project Management.

The programme is designed to facilitate participation from diverse geographical areas in Ireland and most recently, we have participants from Finland taking part in the course.



WHAT WE DID

The NUI Certificate in European Youth Mobility Project Management is a long term training programme that aims to develop youth practitioners' knowledge, skills and competences in high-quality, mobility project management in the context of European programmes. As well as focusing on individual learning, the programme supports practitioners to embed their learning in their organisations. The project is a unique collaboration, between a Higher Education Institute and National Agency, in Europe. As an accredited programme, which awards 20 ECTS credits at Level 6 in the European Qualifications Framework, it increases recognition of the role of youth mobility in youth work.

The Certificate targets youth service managers and youth work practitioners, experienced in the design, development and delivery of youth work programmes in their organisations. They have an interest in integrating high quality international mobility projects in their organisational plans.

CONTRIBUTION

There is a clear opportunity for this programme to contribute to the new European Youth Strategy 2019-2027. The programme focuses on the youth empowerment theme of the strategy that states boosting innovation in quality and recognition of youth work. This programme is innovative in how it provides recognition of youth mobility as a valuable tool in youth work in empowering young people.

We are interested in working with new partners in future editions of the programme.

In addition, as a joint project between a Higher Education Institution and a National Agency, we would like to share our experience of working together and of how it has led to valuable learning for us, collaboration on other initiatives and a challenging of preconceptions of higher education and non-formal education.



PROGRAMME EVALUATION

The evaluation demonstrates that the programme supports youth workers to build professional and organisational capacity for international youth mobility. The evaluation highlights how [longer term](#) engagement in an assessed programme of 7 months supported the reflective practice of participants.

LEARNING SHARED WITH PARTICIPANTS FROM THE WORKSHOP

The programme supports the objectives of the European Training Strategy (ETS) Competence Model for Youth Workers to Work Internationally, focusing specifically on building capacity within youth organisations to work internationally. The certificate programme aligns with the European Youth Strategy by providing formal recognition of mobility as a valuable tool in youth work highlighting the youth worker skills and competences needed to implement youth mobility projects. The workshop highlighted some key aspects of a successful collaboration between national agencies and higher education institutes integrating both formal and non-formal education approaches that support youth workers to in integrating youth mobility in their organisations.

KEY TRENDS IDENTIFIED (COMMONALITIES BETWEEN COMMENTS/ PARTICIPANTS)

- Cooperation between National Agencies and higher education- the value of having a mechanism that supports and enables a partnership and the importance of having **individual and collective benefits** from partnerships
- The value of professional recognition for youth workers working on European level – how this can increase the visibility of the value of youth mobility
- How [long term](#) trainings support learning and reflection and the use of assignment in supporting reflection
- The value of using both formal and non-formal learning approaches in both youth work and higher education sectors.

FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS AT THE END OF THE WORKSHOP

- *"Cooperation between agency and university is possible, and formal and non-formal learning can meet at some point."*
- *"Very interesting!"*
- *"Very interesting programme. I loved the assignments that you give to students and way how you set up the partnership. We have some similar practice and we can certainly think about using / adapting some of elements / features you presented. Thanks for sharing!"*
- *"This was a great example of a cooperation between sectors and between different models of learning!"*



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