

## EUROPEAN ACADEMY ON YOUTH WORK - WORKSHOP REPORT

### Tertiary Level Education of Youth Workers - Trends and Opportunities

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#### KEY WORDS

| higher education, curricula, youth work education, academia

#### TOPIC DISCUSSED

The general idea of this workshop was to explore varieties of youth work education at the tertiary level across Europe. The basis for this workshop was a research on higher education youth work curricula, and the aim was to identify commonalities present in formal youth work education. By combining different interactive methods participants got familiarised with main trends in formal education of youth workers, which contributed to a better understanding of potential ways of improving it.

THERE IS A GROWING INTEREST IN THE TOPIC OF FORMAL EDUCATION OF YOUTH WORKERS AND A NEED TO COMPLEMENT THE UNDERSTANDING OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION OF YOUTH WORKERS WITH MORE UNDERSTANDING OF FORMAL EDUCATION.

#### METHODOLOGY

The workshop lasted for 60 minutes. It was carried out following the three pillar structure and by using three different methods: group work, power point presentation and group discussion.

The session started with participants presenting themselves and sharing their motivation for joining the workshop. After this first task, participants were asked to write down their expectations of formal education of youth workers. In other words, participants were writing down their expectations of how youth work curricula should look like, which topics they were supposed to contain, and what kind of content such programmes should have in order to be relevant for future youth workers.

In the second part, the contributor gave a brief presentation of the research results on formal youth work education across Europe. The idea was to compare the participants' expectations with the existing situation of youth studies and youth work education at tertiary level.

In the third step, participants were asked to comment on the research results and reflect on the education pathways of youth workers in relation to formal education. Several important topics were raised during the discussion.

## KEY ISSUES RAISED SUCH AS CHALLENGES



Following are the most prominent topics and challenges in relation to youth studies, youth work education and the general situation regarding the relationship between youth work practitioners and researchers:

- There is a difference between youth studies and youth work education;
- Participants expressed the need for better connection and cooperation between academia and practice;
- The youth sector recognises the lack of academic research in the field of youth work (this type of research is different from research on young people) and youth work education;
- There was a discussion about competences of university professors delivering courses on youth work. According to the study presented and the participants' experience, they mostly focus on transmission of knowledge rather than development of skills and attitudes;
- The group discussed the potential of using this kind of research in practice.



## INNOVATIVE PRACTICES

In terms of innovative practices, a life-long learning programme at the University of Rijeka was mentioned as a good way of cooperation between the civil and academic sectors. A participant from Italy pointed out that Italy wishes to develop a similar structure with their National Agency.

For more information about the life-long learning programme Young People in Contemporary Society, please consult [http://www.idi.hr/mladi/index\\_en.html](http://www.idi.hr/mladi/index_en.html).

Participants stated that these types of research are needed, but that they are relatively rare. At the end of the workshop, participants asked where can they find additional information about education for youth workers and their educational pathways as such. As a result, they were referred to the project of the Youth Partnership on educational pathways of youth workers (expert group on researching education and career paths of youth workers) and they were informed about the forthcoming publication based on the presented research.

**KEY TRENDS IDENTIFIED (COMMONALITIES BETWEEN COMMENTS/PARTICIPANTS)**

- Growing interest in the topic of formal education of youth workers: participants pointed out that so far, civil society organisations have been used to focusing on non-formal education. However, there is an obvious need to complement the understanding of non-formal education of youth workers with more understanding of formal education. Thus this workshop was important to them.
- Lately, in several countries, one can observe a trend of hiring youth workers to teach courses in university programmes educating youth workers. Due to youth workers' field experience, universities have been deciding to appoint them as lecturers in order to deliver what pure academics can hardly offer: practical advice and real life experience. Participants pointed out that this practice should be explored in more detail, and that benefits and possible challenges of this idea should be documented.

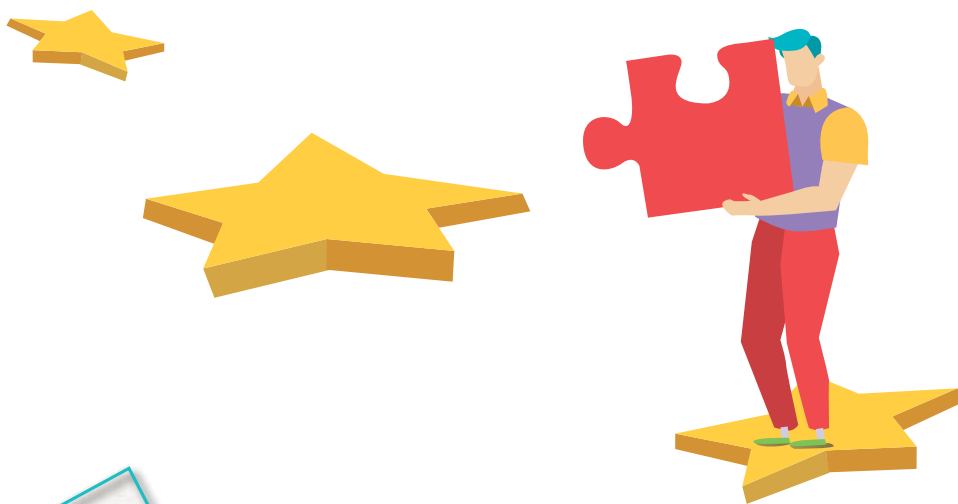
**LINKS TO FURTHER RESOURCES OR INFORMATION ABOUT YOUR PROJECT AVAILABLE ONLINE**



Seminar Education and Training Pathways of Youth Workers:  
<http://education-and-training.humak.fi>

Expert group on researching education and career paths of youth workers:  
<https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/expert-group-researching-education-career-paths-youth-workers>

Project Supporting Evidence-based Education of Youth Workers (SEEW):  
<http://www.idi.hr/en/projekti-p/projekti/supporting-evidence-based-education-of-youth-workers-seevw/>



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