

EUROPEAN ACADEMY ON YOUTH WORK - WORKSHOP REPORT

Digital youth work in policy and practice (Finland / Europe)

Suvi Tuominen and **Juha Kiviniemi**, Verke - Centre of Expertise for Digital Youth Work, Finland
Contact: juha@verke.org, suvi@verke.org

WORKSHOP STRUCTURE

In our 90 minutes workshop, we aimed to tackle three interconnected topics:

1. how digital youth work is implemented in European policy
2. explore a specific digital youth work approach (maker activities) and
3. give an insight to how one of our latest tools for innovating youth work practice can be utilized.

The workshop started with a round of introductions followed by two poll questions on Mentimeter. The first part of the actual workshop content was more theoretical, the second part focused on concrete examples from the field and the final part gave participants a chance to try out a practical exercise from our Innobox toolkit. The first two parts were lectures, and the third part was carried out in groups of 5-6 workshop participants. Throughout the workshop, we also used an online tool called Mentimeter to gauge participants' views on different topics.

KEY ISSUES EXPLORED AND HIGHLIGHTED

We started the first part with briefly presenting Verke as an organisation and defining digital youth work. After that, we gave participants an insight on how European policy concerning digital youth work has developed in recent years. In our presentation, we touched on documents like the report of the EU expert group for digitalisation and youth (2016-2017), the EU work plan for youth (2016-2018), the EU Youth Strategy of 2019-2027 and Council Conclusions on Smart Youth Work. In a poll to the group, we saw that only one participant could identify that there is, in fact, a national policy in place for digital youth work. Others either replied "none" or were unsure of its existence. In the first part, we also presented some tools with which participants can develop their organisations' own digital youth work.

In the second part of our workshop, we covered the necessity of implementing practical technology education activities in youth work, namely by incorporating maker approaches into existing youth work curriculum. First, we gave an overview of the basics of maker activities in a youth work context and tried to translate the basic tenets of maker culture into the framework of the youth field. We highlighted several commonalities- i.e. working together, building communities- that are intrinsic to both maker culture and youth work.

Highlighted maker activity examples showcased how youth work goals can be achieved by means of maker activities. One example was a group of young people engaging in activities around lego robots, which for them were only the vessel for successful group activities and travelling outside their own country to meet other like-minded young people. Another discussed activity involved recording sound clips in a workshop with families, followed by building electronic interfaces with a group of young people, topped off by creating paintings in a third workshop with conductive paint. This enabled the co-creation of interactive art.

In our final section, we showcased one of Verke's latest publications called Innobox. It is a toolkit for innovating new (digital) youth work practice based on organisations' own strategy or action plan. Innobox is freely available for translation and it can be modified according to local needs. The English version can already be found at www.digitallyouthwork.eu and it is available for preorder as a physical product at Verke's English website. In the workshop, we told about the background of Innobox, showcased the structure of it and did one of the "warm-up" exercises with the participants. The task was to think of as many new uses for the combination of a data projector and a scale as possible in 5 minutes. The purpose of the task is to wake up creativity, and after that move on to more demanding innovation tasks.



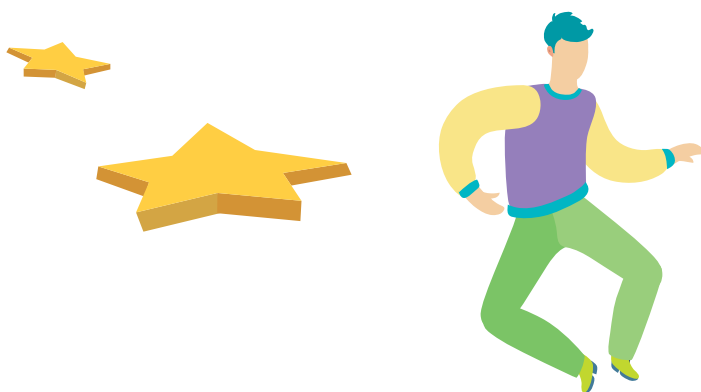
FEEDBACK FROM PARTICIPANTS

We got good oral feedback from participants right after the workshop. It seems that using digital media and technology in youth work varies quite a lot from country to another, and a strategic approach for developing digital youth work is needed in many countries.

From our workshop contents, especially Innobox gained a lot of interest and we got at least two speaker invitations based on our workshop. One participant said after the Academy that our workshop was the best he went to. :)

LINKS TO FURTHER RESOURCES OR INFORMATION ABOUT THE PROJECT AVAILABLE ONLINE

- Presentation used in the workshop: <https://www.slideshare.net/verkeorg/digital-youth-work-in-policies-and-practices-eayw-2252019>
- Digital Youth Work project (2017-2019) website: Good Practice Videos, Training materials etc from 6 countries: www.digitalyouthwork.eu
- Innobox description and ordering: <https://www.verke.org/material/innobox/?lang=en>
- Article collection: Maker Activities in Youth Work (Verke): <https://www.verke.org/material/maker-activities-youth-work/?lang=en>
- Article collection: Digitalisation and Youth Work (ENTK&Verke): <https://www.verke.org/material/digitalisation-youth-work/?lang=en>
- Developing Digital Youth Work: https://ec.europa.eu/youth/news/developing-digital-youth-work-%E2%80%93-agile-mindset-crucial_en
- Council Conclusions on Smart Youth Work: <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/abac1aee-dadd-11e7-a506-01aa75ed71a1>



The views and opinions expressed do not necessarily express the official view of the European Commission or the partners behind the European Academy on Youth Work. Reproduction of texts and pictures is authorised.

*Published by MOVIT, Ljubljana, Slovenia
October 2019*

Design and layout: AIKO, Maja Cerjak s.p.

*More information about the EAYW:
www.eayw.net*