

European Academy on Youth Work

Innovation, Current Trends and Developments in Youth Work

Second edition, 2 – 5 November 2021, Slovenia

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PROGRAMME

We are looking for **examples of innovative practices and approaches in the field of youth work** as well as **studies or policies supporting quality and innovation in youth work** in Europe to be presented at the 2nd edition of the European Academy on Youth Work.

1. What is the European Academy on Youth Work (EAYW)?

The EAYW is an initiative of National Agencies of the EU Programme Erasmus+ Youth and the European Solidarity Corps¹ as well as of SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres. The EAYW aims to support innovation in youth work and youth work policy, to promote the development of quality youth work and to contribute to creating a common ground on youth work and youth work policy. It offers a regular platform for reflection, exchange and knowledge gathering on current European topics, trends and developments with relevance to the youth field. It wants to enable learning about why, when and how innovation in youth work happens and when innovative approaches and practices taken in the youth work field are successful in responding to current developments and challenges faced by young people across Europe.

In this respect, the EAYW responds to the demands expressed in the final Declaration of the 3rd European Youth Work Convention to encourage and support the different stakeholders of the European youth work community of practice to strive “towards the maintenance of the good structures and practices that already exist, their development when the need arises, and the space for innovation in our thinking, our organisation and our practices”. Especially “in a post-pandemic Europe, youth work must seek to innovate and go further than the paths already known”.²

The outcomes of studies, reflections, exchange of views and debates on these questions undertaken in the framework of the EAYW should support the further development of youth work as well as different political frameworks for youth work development in Europe and thus contribute to the European Youth Work Agenda and its implementation through the Bonn process.

The target group of the EAYW are youth workers, paid and/or volunteers, active at all levels (local, regional, national, European) as well as professionals in areas with relevance for the youth sector, such as youth work policy and public services, National Agencies and other youth work structures, [I]NGOs as well as science and research. Geographically, the EAYW addresses stakeholders from the wider European context, including Europe’s neighbouring countries South of the Mediterranean.

2. About the second edition of the EAYW

The 2nd EAYW event follows the successful 1st pilot edition, which was organised in May 2019 in Kranjska Gora, Slovenia, and brought together around 170 professionals from youth work practice, research and policy,

¹ National Agencies of Austria, Belgium-FL, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, The Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia and Sweden

² [Final Declaration of the 3rd European Youth Work Convention, Signposts for the Future \(Bonn, 10 December 2020\)](#)

including institutions supporting youth work at different levels. Following a call for proposals, 36 innovative practices in and related to youth work were presented and discussed in relation to current trends and developments identified by the participants. More information and the final report of the 1st EAYW event are available at www.eayw.net.

The 2nd edition will build on the experiences of the first EAYW event, but also intends to go a step further by putting a stronger emphasis on learning about the mechanisms that spark and support innovation in youth work as a response to challenges and changing realities faced by societies and young people. It also takes into account the outcomes of current research on innovation in youth work carried out by the EAYW.

The next EAYW event aims to offer a space for knowledge-building through peer learning and exchange, and networking, in particular:

- To jointly **explore what are the main challenges and trends in and of relevance for youth work** that are calling for and leading to new, innovative and creative approaches and developments;
- To **showcase innovative practices, approaches, concepts and strategies** developed in response to these challenges and trends;
- Based on the presented innovative examples and other inputs during the event as well as current research on the topic of innovation in youth work, to **find out more about how innovation has evolved in youth work, and which conditions are needed** by young people, youth workers, organisations working with young people and other relevant stakeholders **to spark and sustain innovative and impactful approaches, practices or strategies** and
- To **produce outcomes** of the reflections and discussions during the event, which will support further developments related to innovation in youth work.

The EAYW aims to be inclusive and participatory in its approach and to give a voice to contributions representing the diverse levels, environments and stakeholders in youth work. Furthermore, it promotes cross-sectorial and multi-perspective approaches involving youth work practice, research, and policy, which have proven vital to successfully address identified developments or challenges. Reflection based on different perspectives should help to identify responses to trends that could be taken up by different roles.

The EAYW further aims to look at what happens outside youth work, what is the specific role of youth work, and how it connects and interacts with other sectors.

Based on this overall approach, the 2nd EAYW wants to offer a forum for presenting and learning from diverse contributions that stimulate and enable reflection, exchange and learning outcomes.

[A note on the potential influence of the Covid-19 pandemic on the EAYW event](#)

In order to allow for ample joint time for exchange, sharing, networking and learning from and with each other, the EAYW is envisaged as an international residential event.

Should it not be possible to hold the event in November 2021 as planned due to the state of the Covid-19 pandemic, the EAYW will be postponed to spring 2022. In this case, in autumn 2021, a series of connected smaller online events will be organised (or blended activities, if possible), which could tackle specific questions or topics and lead up to the main (residential) event in spring 2022.

The contributions selected on the basis of this call will be invited to the EAYW in either of the two envisaged formats. Further information will be made available together with the selection results in April (see also point 7 below).

3. Call for contributions – what are we looking for?

We are looking for **examples of innovative practices and approaches taken in youth work in Europe or being of relevance for its further development, impact, quality, visibility and recognition**, and responding to the changing realities, current developments and challenges faced by and affecting young people. **Contributions can address any level of youth work**, from local to international, and they can come from the various fields of youth work including **practice, education and training, research and policy**.

*As **innovation in youth work**, we understand demonstrated methodologies, practices, tools, ways of approaching target groups, or organisational models that have new elements, that are upgrades of existing practices, or are completely new to the youth field or to a particular context, and that enable youth work to better address the needs of young people, positively impact their lives, and/or contribute to a wider social change.*

As the environments in which youth work happens as well as the frameworks and practices of youth work are diverse across and within the different countries of Europe, the question of what is innovative must be answered within the specific “ecosystem” or environment, in which a particular approach, practice or policy is developed.

Contributions can focus on:

1. Youth work practice (e.g. current pilot projects and practices in youth work at all levels, new or tailored educational resources etc.)
2. Education and training of youth workers (e.g. new practices in education of youth workers; training practices, concepts, initiatives or strategies supporting quality in youth work in response to particular trends or developments etc.)
3. Knowledge development, research, better understanding of youth work (e.g. results from latest/ current research projects or insights from studies exploring how youth work happens, or what happens in youth work)
4. Development of youth work in youth policy, finance, funding schemes and programmes (e.g. new developments within different youth policy frameworks and measures within such frameworks at all levels (local, regional, national...))
5. Youth information (e.g. easily accessible youth information and communication strategies)
6. Cross-cutting / combined approaches, developments or initiatives

Contributions should address identified themes or current trends in or influencing the youth work field, such as, but not limited to:

1. Maintaining and developing the provision of youth work
2. Recognition of youth work
3. Professionalism and professionalisation of youth work, development of quality in youth work; education, training and competence-building of youth workers and trainers
4. Accessibility & inclusivity of youth work (inclusion and diversity, also in digital environments; youth work in remote areas etc.)
5. Youth participation and critical youth citizenship in the light of changing realities and challenges brought about by the digital environment as well as political developments such as populism, extremism, fake news, shrinking spaces of action of youth people etc.

6. Youth work opening up to other sectors and spaces, influences from other fields, new approaches to thinking about youth work, cross-sectoral cooperation
7. Mental well-being of youth, youth workers and trainers
8. Environmental sustainability, green youth work
9. Digitalisation in youth work (digital and blended learning, using the potentials of online learning while staying true to youth work principles and values)

The selected contributors will be invited to present their contribution in the frame of an interactive workshop or working group, possibly also in a session together with another contributor(s) presenting an example that addresses a similar challenge or topic, to stimulate comparison and debate. Contributions are meant to be a way into the topic: They should go beyond promotion or showcasing initiatives and spark exchanges and joint reflection, following the principles of peer learning.

A member of the facilitation team will contact the contributors after the selection with further information.

4. Who can submit a proposal for a contribution?

All members of the European youth work community of practice are invited to submit proposals for contributions, including youth workers, representatives of organisations working with young people from all levels (local, regional, national, European), professionals (volunteers or staff) in areas with relevance for the youth work sector, such as trainers or educators, representatives of youth work policies and public services, National Agencies, SALTO RCs, and other youth work structures, science and research.

The EAYW also explicitly welcomes proposals from professionals in other sectors targeting young people which have the potential to positively influence the further development of youth work.

Recent research³ seems to indicate that innovation is not necessarily a quality that youth workers and organisations are aware of when analysing their own work, and that many might not find it easy to define if their own approaches would qualify as being innovative or not.

If you think that you and your team, organisation, institution, group of young people etc. have developed an approach, a concept, study, practice or policy

- which is relevant, impactful and has made a change (or has the potential to do so) in your environment and contributes to developing youth work further, that is offering something new or even “out of the box” and
- which could be interesting for other participants to learn about,

then we are interested to hear from you!

5. Expectations from contributors

In the spirit of the EAYW, the contributions are seen as inspiring inputs and at the same time tools for learning more about what is needed to enable and drive forward innovative approaches and developments. Therefore, contributors are expected to be ready to present their practice as well as to come with an open mind for further exchange, analysis and discussion. In particular, they should be ready to:

- Present their experience and their practice as an example that others might learn from and be inspired by;

³ RAY research on innovation in Erasmus+ Youth KA2 projects, first phase (2020/2021); EAYW research on innovation in youth work (2020/2021)

- Spark and engage in a debate with other contributors and participants having different perspectives and to be open to accept and potentially embrace different views on a certain issue;
- Jointly reflect on questions, such as what makes their example innovative, how it contributes to the further development and quality of youth work, what are the factors that enabled, or would be needed to better enable, its implementation, outcomes and impact, and what would be needed to transfer their experience to another context.

Concretely, the selected contributors will be expected to:

- Provide brief written information about their contribution before the EAYW event;
- Give a presentation and engage in an exchange about it with participants during the event;
- Submit a report of their contribution after the event (including main outcomes of reflections during the event) to be used for the final report and for showcasing the contribution through relevant channels (in particular the EAYW website).

Guidelines and support for the written contributions and for the presentation during the event will be provided by the facilitation team.

Proposals for contributions will be considered in relation to their

- Quality and relevance in relation to innovation and supporting the further development of youth work;
- Potential to stimulate and enable reflection and debate related to a specific area, topic or development of current relevance in or related to youth work;
- Potential for learning about why, when and/or how innovation happens in youth work (what are preconditions and supporting factors needed for an innovative approach to be implemented and to be successful);
- Potential for learning more about the relation between innovation and quality of youth work;
- Potential for transferability/adaptation of (parts of) the practice/ approach/ initiative to other environments and
- The readiness of the contributor to present the practice/ approach/ initiative and to engage in further reflection and discussion of (aspects of) it together with other contributors and participants in a multi-perspective approach.

6. Payment

Travel costs and full board and lodging of the selected contributors will be covered by the organisers. The selected contributors will also receive a fee in the amount of **1.000 EUR** upon completion of the above-mentioned tasks.

7. How to submit a proposal & important deadlines

Proposals for contributions should be submitted online **by 25th March 2021** at this link:

<https://movit.typeform.com/to/wmNK1vjn>

Information about selection results: 30 April 2021

In the online form, you will be asked to share some information and thoughts about your proposed practice example, its potential interest for the other participants at the EAYW event and its links to the topics of innovation and quality, trends and developments in youth work.



For further information, please contact:

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Please note that the online form needs to be filled in and submitted in one go. The questions are listed below, so you can prepare answers beforehand, as needed.



Questions in the application form:

Personal data

- Full name, phone number, Email, country of residence
- Title of the practice example you propose to present
Note: in this form, we will use the term “practice” to include all kinds of projects, studies, concepts, methodologies, organisation models, strategies, approaches and educational materials etc. that can be presented at the EAYW.
- Institution or organisation supporting the practice example, its address and website (if existing)
- Your role in the institution/organisation and in the practice example?
- Name and contact of the practice coordinator (if different from you)
- Your professional background and experience linked to the practice that you propose to present

Your contribution

1. Which area of or related to youth work does your project come from? (Multiple choice list 1 with 6 options + “other” category, see page 3.)
2. Which challenge, development or trend does your practice example respond to? (Multiple choice list 2 with 9 options + “other” category, see page 3-4)
3. Summary of the main objectives and content of your practice example (max 2,500 characters)
4. Who contributed to the development and implementation of the practice?
(E.g. young people, youth workers or managers in the organisation, office colleagues, partners in other organisations/institutions, people from outside the youth work field etc.)
5. Why would you like to present this practice at the EAYW?
(Why would it be interesting for other participants to hear about it?)
6. What, do you think, makes your practice innovative for the environment in which it was/is developed?
7. How does your practice contribute to the further development and quality of youth work?
8. What, do you think, were the main factors (elements or conditions) that enabled or helped this practice to happen and to become a success?
9. Which factors or conditions were missing, hindering or challenging the development of the practice?
10. Which questions would you like to discuss or explore further with other contributors and participants at the EAYW?
11. If available, please list links where one can find further information about your practice