

Study on Innovation in Youth Work - Summary of Desk Research

1. Methodology

The first step of the exploratory phase of the study consisted of a desk research of existing findings and conclusions, coming from other studies, researches, publications and articles linked to innovation in the field of youth work and related fields, such as education and social work. The desk research was aimed at identifying existing definitions of innovation and descriptions of factors that support and hinder innovation. Two types of documents were analysed:

- Documents provided by the network of the National Agencies implementing the study;
- Documents compiled by the team of researchers, found on the internet by browsing the following keywords: “Youth work and innovation”, “Youth workers and innovation”, “Innovative youth work” and “Critical review on innovation”

The documents taken into consideration were analysed through a summary grid that included information about the source, the purpose of the document, its author(s), space for definitions, factors of and obstacles to innovation, and a column for additional information. All researchers analysed all collected materials, taking notes of anything that they considered potentially useful for the study. The completed grid was finalised as a Summary of Desk Research and served as a basis for preparing the draft definition of innovation in youth work and a proposal for the major groups of factors that enable or support innovation in youth work to happen. The major findings of the desk research are integrated in the final report of the study.

The grid should be understood as a working document, and the publications are listed in the order in which they were consulted, discussed and used for the further development of concepts and understandings that were then further explored during the study.

2. Grid of findings

	Source	Purpose	Definition of innovation	Factors of innovation	Obstacles to innovation	Additional information
Naomi Stanton (ed.)	Innovation in Youth Work: Thinking in Practice (2019)	To offer reflections for youth workers to stimulate their thinking, dialogue and practice		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - technological and social change - youthful zest - commitment to public service - as a response to pressure from an active membership of young people and youth workers - desire of practitioners to better serve the changing needs of members - freedom from state and commercial funding - a set of shared internal beliefs - having a role and purpose - pressure to prove impact and worth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - funding cuts - decline in voluntary and professional youth workers - short-term, interest-driven financial interventions 	
Shruthi Baskaran, Khanjan Mehta	What is innovation anyway? Youth perspectives from resource-constrained environments, Technovation, Vol 52-53 (2016)		Innovation is often seen as a result of interactive learning between individuals and organisations located in a specific institutional system (national, regional, or sectoral) (Edquist and Hommen, 2008). At a fundamental level, innovation is the process of	Culture driven, innovator driven and context driven factors		Applying a “ scale of their applicability ”, i.e. whether the innovation was relevant at an individual level, for a small community or for a larger community.” (determined by the research team) Exploring innovation through “major themes of innovations (scientific, business-related, arts-related, and society-

			generating and recombining ideas to establish a relationship between present efforts and past experiences to solve future problems (Bartel and Garud, 2009). It could also represent the process of doing something new or adding value to old things by changing the way they are done (Dawe and Guthrie, 2004), and lessons learned from one innovative activity can often be applied to improve other activities (Lazonick, 2004).			based), driving factors (e.g. culture versus context) and rationales (e.g. livelihood versus quality of life)."
Elizabeth Chell and Rosemary Athayde	The identification and measurement of innovative characteristics of young people (2009)		Change associated with the creation and adaptation of ideas that are new-to-world, new to nation/region, new-to-sector or new-to-organisation			Creativity, self-efficacy, energy, risk-propensity and leadership are key generic innovation skills.
EU BEPA working group report	Social Innovation, A Decade of Changes (2014)			Rise of a hyper-connected society Supportive policies, adequate governance, innovative finance,		The concept of ecosystems has been borrowed from biology through management science to

				a variety of capacity building and recognition tools such as incubators, hubs, forums, prizes and research in methodologies, benchmarking and impact measurement are the main components, which, together, create the 'natural environment' for social innovation to flourish.		describe the environments where social innovations emerge, grow and thrive.
Lisa J., Daniel, J., Klein, A.	RESEARCH PAPER Innovation agendas: the ambiguity of value creation, Prometheus, Vol 32 (2014)		The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)'s definition of innovation is quite clear: "An organisational innovation is the implementation of a new organisational method in the firm's business practices, workplace organisation or external relations."	<p>Experiential context: activities, conditions and intangibles</p> <p>Activities are the interactions, actions, tasks and deeds through which a creative endeavour is sought (e.g. research, collaboration, communication, support, information activities, exploration, investment, diversification).</p> <p>Conditions are the circumstances of the environment and organisation, in which the professional, administrative and functional activities occur (e.g. risk/ tolerance profile, learning environment, flexibility/ time constraints, diversity and openness).</p>		<p>The defining feature of an innovation is novelty: Innovations are "new, and innovation processes are concerned with the production of novelty. The trouble is novelty does not, of itself, create value. The challenge for organisations is not to produce novelty, but to create value."</p> <p>We have revealed that recursive interpretations, negotiations and sense-making are undertaken in the process of creating value in innovations, revealing that there is a complex interplay of context and community.</p>

				<p>Intangibles are the implicit influences, feelings and tacit atmosphere that are manifest or understood in organisational processes (e.g. knowledge, trust, inspiration, insight, faith, hope and curiosity).</p> <p>Organisational context: structure, culture, operations, physical setting</p>		
Kuczynska, O., Goncalves, S., Guerri, L..	Developing Youth Work Innovation (2019)	The eHandbook is focused on innovation in youth work. It is intended for practitioners who are looking for innovative tools to use in their activities with young people, including digital youth work.	<p>Innovation, although conceptually closely related to creativity, is not the same. It does not refer so much to the internal inventive capacities of individuals but more to the external outputs of those creative skills.</p> <p>The external outputs of those creative skills as understood as a new service, an enhanced product, a thought-provoking piece of art or a more efficient method of learning a foreign language.</p>	<p>Context related: Not only can innovations be just small upgrades, or new combinations of already known solutions, but they are also time- and space-related. What is innovative in one context might not be considered so in another. Need of a fertile ecosystem with the right conditions to bolster their own creativity.</p> <p>COMPETENCE The capacity to innovate requires a mindset bound to the future and rooted in collaboration and proactivity.</p> <p>To innovate and disseminate newfound practices in youth work, practitioners need a fertile ecosystem with the right</p>	<p>RECOGNITION It is hard for youth workers to innovate, if their own needs - such as professional recognition, financial stability, organisational support, academic training, and many others - are not met.</p> <p>Constantly focusing on what is the most effective can hinder the capacity of your organisation to innovate and stay relevant in the field. An old proven way can be the biggest enemy for innovation.</p>	

				<p>conditions to bolster their own creativity.</p> <p>Youth workers require: training to learn how to observe and research young people's trends, emergent needs and potentials; spaces to create experiment and test pilot ideas; resources to produce new materials and activities; gateways to distribution channels and access to a wider community of researchers and practitioners.</p>		
Anderson, N., Potočník, K., JiZhou, J.	<i>Innovation and Creativity in Organizations: A State-of-the-Science Review, Prospective Commentary, and Guiding Framework,</i> Journal of Management, Vol 5 (2014)		<p>Creativity and innovation at work are the process, outcomes, and products of attempts to develop and introduce new and improved ways of doing things. The creativity stage of this process refers to idea generation, and innovation refers to the subsequent stage of implementing ideas toward better procedures, practices, or products. Creativity and innovation can occur at the level of the individual, work team, organisation, or</p>	<p>Componential Theory of Organisational Creativity and Innovation: There are three major components contributing to individual or small team creativity: expertise, creative-thinking skill, and intrinsic motivation. In contrast, the main components of the wider work environment that influence employee creativity are organisational motivation to innovate, resources (including finances, time availability, and personnel resources), and managerial practices, such as enabling challenging work and supervisory encouragement (Amabile; Amabile & Conti, 1999).</p>		

			<p>at more than one of these levels combined, but will invariably result in identifiable benefits at one or more of these levels of analysis.</p> <p>Whereas creativity has been conceived of as the generation of novel and useful ideas, innovation has generally been argued to be both the production of creative ideas as the first stage and their implementation as the second stage (Amabile, 1996; Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Shalley & Zhou, 2008; West & Farr, 1990).</p>	<p>Interactionist Perspective of Organisational Creativity: At the organisational level, innovation is a function of both individual and group creativity (Woodman et al.). (See more on p. 4.)</p> <p>Model of Individual Creative Action: Ford (1996) argued that employees have to consider between two competing options—to be creative or to undertake merely routine, habitual actions. According to this framework, there are three groups of factors that might influence this decision: sensemaking processes, motivation, and knowledge and skills.</p> <p>Four-Factor Theory of Team Climate for Innovation: Innovation is enhanced if (a) vision is understandable, valued, and accepted by the team members; (b) team members perceive they can propose new ideas and solutions without being judged or criticized; (c) there is a stimulating debate and discussion of different possible solutions within the team which</p>		
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				<p>at the same time will more likely be carefully examined; and finally (d) team members perceive support for innovation (Anderson & West, 1998; West).</p> <p>Levels: Individual, team, organisational and multilevel, only few studies do a multilevel research</p>		
Susan Dawe (editor)	<p><i>Vocational education and training and innovation: research readings</i>, NCVR (National Centre for Vocational Education Research) (2004)</p>		<p>It is generally agreed that innovation involves doing something new or doing existing things in a new way, although, in his chapter, Kearney argues that it is only when 'doing something new or differently' is commercialised or applied in the community that it becomes an 'innovation'. Moreover, his definition of innovation states that, to be an innovation, it must add value to a business operation or be useful to the community in which it is applied.</p>	<p>Governments tend to follow two approaches to fostering innovation. One approach is to offer a regulatory framework that supports innovation, such as legislation to protect intellectual property, but otherwise innovation is left to enterprises and is seen as a by-product of market forces and competition (Sheehan & Messinis 2003). The other approach recognises that enterprises rarely innovate alone and aims to consciously foster a national innovation system.</p> <p>The key ingredients of the innovation process identified from the case studies are the important role of government in providing a supporting environment and a broad and deep skills pool with a</p>		

			<p>Innovation is the process by which new ideas and discoveries are made and turned into valuable new goods and services, or more efficient ways of producing the same goods and services.</p>	<p>combination of hard and soft skills. The case studies also provide information about new, more responsive skills formation arrangements, including the importance of focusing on international benchmarks, and closer ties to the workplace.</p> <p>The Finland case study indicates that innovation arises from complex interactions between individuals, organisations and their operating environment.</p>		
Morciano, D., and Merico, M.	<p><i>Critical Youth Work for Youth-Driven Innovation: A Theoretical Framework, Youth as Architects of Social Change: Global Efforts to Advance Youth-Driven Innovation (2017)</i></p>		<p>EU definition (2014): key feature of social innovation appears to be the activation of a virtuous circle between the ability to respond more effectively to specific social needs and the capacity to continue to do so over time on the part of the range of actors involved.</p> <p>Innovation begins when a physical object or a mental representation (an idea, a concept, etc.) appears for the first</p>	<p>Innovation processes are increasingly influenced by short networks based on territorial proximity, where face to face interactions (often informal) turn knowledge into key resources for innovation (Trigilia 2007).</p> <p>Creativity may be valued as a tool of empowerment for more marginalized social groups or in context in which resources are scarce. [see also frugal innovation and reverse innovation] (De Certeau 1984).</p> <p>Innovation is supported on the condition that it results in new and improved tools functional</p>		<p>Innovation-related skills (e.g., leadership, creativity, curiosity, problem-solving, risk-taking, etc.).</p>

			<p>time in society as the result of a creative process or the discovery of something previously unknown.</p>	<p>to the maintenance of the fundamental values on which the social body or organisation of reference is based (Cooper and White 1994).</p> <p>The availability of flexible time and spaces for creative practices and the development of prototypes is also considered a resource that helps to nurture innovation. (Sebba 2009)</p> <p>Innovation experience can be boosted by motivation arising from difficult conditions such as poverty, social exclusion, or failures. (Sebba 2009)</p> <p>Indeed, the scarcity of resources in such contexts encourages “lateral thinking ... to develop innovative solutions for pressing problems”. (Baskaran & Mehta, 2016, p. 2)</p> <p>The social constructivist framework of Daniel and Klein (2014) on innovation helps to investigate how tensions and dissonance between different perspectives of meaning or significance are critical for the activation and development of</p>		
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				experiences of innovation and change.		
RAY (Research-based analysis of European youth programmes)	<i>RESEARCH PROJECT ON THE IMPACT OF KA2.</i> Transnational strategic partnerships bring new challenges, solutions and practices to the youth sector (unpublished draft report (2020))	The study analyses the variety and diversity of formats of Transnational Strategic Partnerships, and patterns of similarities and/or differences between these different formats; the impact of transnational projects funded through KA2 on the youth sector, both in relation to the fostering of innovation and the strengthening of good practice.		Partners were often indicated as success factors, and were often directly related to the innovative nature of projects. The strengthening of good practice and innovation took the form of exchange of experience and expertise amongst partners.		
Mark Baldwin	<i>Promoting and Managing Innovation: Critical Reflection, Organizational Learning and the Development of Innovative Practice in National Children's Voluntary</i>	Critical Reflection, Organisational Learning and the Development of Innovative Practice in a National Children's Voluntary Organisation	Innovation is seen as an incremental and developmental process, rather than a new event. They see it as developing incrementally through cycles of action and critical reflection. Both the process and product of critical	People engaged in innovation require the 'freedom to innovate' (Nutley and Davies, 2000). Open, decentralized and flatter organisational structure (Lam, 2005; Osborne, 1998; Tidd et al., 2005). Strong systems for managing organisational learning (Osborne, 1998; Tidd et al., 2005) and for the development of the	Centralized, top-down imposition of process and organisation actually stifles innovation (Lam, 2005; Nutley and Davies, 2000; Osborne, 1998; Tidd et al., 2005). There is also a broad agreement that	There is also agreement that attention to the process of innovation means that it is more likely to be cyclical than linear in nature, and will involve the acquisition of new knowledge through a learning process. There is a logical separation between

	<i>Organization, Qualitative Social Work, Vol 7 (2008)</i>		<p>reflection and evaluation</p> <p>Practice based upon the values of listening to the voice of children and young people</p>	<p>learning organisation (Room, 2005; Tidd et al., 2005).</p> <p>Practice should 'hear the voice' of young people. Critical reflection is a part of the normative concept of the learning organisation, committed to innovation and the pursuit of excellence in service delivery.</p> <p>When teams are in a period of change, which all of those engaged in the research were, openness to learning is paramount. Change requires learning and learning involves change. Innovation, we learnt, has time costs. 'Doing it properly' involves participation by staff and service users, as well as sophisticated and time-consuming consultation. Time for a critically evaluative approach, for instance, needs to be built into workloads.</p> <p>Innovation involves a degree of risk-taking.</p>	<p>attempts (usually from the top down) to impose rational innovation will fall foul of political considerations (Majone, 1989; Osborne, 1998).</p> <p>It is difficult to sustain innovation, as defined earlier, unless the whole team is engaged in the enterprise.</p> <p>Vagueness of organisational policy is cited as one threat to innovation.</p>	<p>process and outcome in innovation, but the two are interlinked.</p>
Kirsten Møller	European innovation policy: a broad-based strategy? (2010)	This article provides an overview of innovation policies in the EU and Member States and examines		<p>Framework conditions for innovation: state aid reform, intellectual property rights, educational reform, university reforms, innovation poles and</p>		

		<p>how employee-driven innovation is being discussed and how the role of employees as drivers of innovation in Europe is being understood and supported by joint European innovation policies and measures.</p>		<p>knowledge-driven industrial clusters</p> <p>In the Danish report on innovation policy, a distinction is made between research-driven, employee-driven, market-driven, price-driven and user-driven innovation.</p> <p>The Commission recognises that ‘innovation cannot be organised by decree. It comes from people, and only people – scientists, researchers, entrepreneurs and their employees, investors, consumers and public authorities – will make Europe more innovative’ (European Commission, 2009e: 4).</p> <p>The prerequisite for employee-driven innovation is a management-employee relationship built on mutual trust and a generally supportive climate of openness towards the ideas put forward by employees and towards the innovative potential found within employee collective bodies.</p> <p>The development of innovation-minded employees throughout</p>	
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				<p>an entire organisation – and not merely in the ‘innovation department’, should such exist – requires investment in systematic knowledge-sharing processes, in new forms of involvement, changes in attitudes and incentives, a work organisation allowing flexible working teams, collaborative relationships, a positive learning environment, systematic workplace learning and a management-employee relationship built on trust and the mutual recognition of both partners’ interests.</p>		
Anne Crowley & Dan Moxon	New and innovative forms of youth participation in decision-making processes, Council of Europe (2017)		<p>The authors argue that, rather than focusing on a shift in social attitudes and behaviour amongst young people, innovation is better understood as a process of experimentation, through which new and more effective approaches can be found.</p> <p>The term ‘innovation’ is defined (in the Encarta Concise</p>	<p>Innovative approaches can come from both young people and adults/ professionals;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► innovation is often linked to a desire to solve a specific issue; ► innovative methods evolve as a project that is established through experimentation and trial; ► demonstrating impact is challenging, but necessary to assess the success of a new method; ► successful methods and forms developed through innovation need to be replicated; ► many opportunities for the 		<p>At the outset, it was recognised that ‘innovative practice’ in youth participation is poorly defined, and likely to be context specific. As a result, it was decided not to impose a working definition of innovation on research participants, and instead allow them to identify their own conception and examples of innovation.</p> <p>For each of the five forms of participation, survey</p>

			<p>Dictionary) as “the act or process of inventing or introducing something new”. To be innovative is to be “new and original” or “to take a new and original approach”. Social policy innovation is defined by the European Union as meaning “developing new ideas, services and models to better address social issues. It invites input from public and private actors, including civil society, to improve social services”.</p>	<p>development of new methods of participation are currently provided by the online world, which has implications for education curricula and for how we build digital literacy and media competency amongst Europe’s citizens.</p> <p>Support for innovation by public bodies means that new approaches must have clear objectives, be systematically evaluated, and that those approaches that are found to be most effective should be replicated.</p>		<p>participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with the statement: ‘This form of participation would be considered innovative in the geographic area I work in’. A scale of 0-10 was used for answers where 0 equals low and 10 equals high.</p>
<p>John Brennan, Steve Ryan, Marina Ranga, Simon Broek, Niccolo Durazzi, Bregtje Kamphuis</p>	<p>Innovation in higher education (2014)</p>		<p>A new or significantly improved product, process, organisational method or an organisation itself developed by or having a significant impact on the activities of a higher education institution and/or other higher education stakeholders</p>	<p>Higher education innovation system can be seen as a set of functions, components and relationships, which allow us to disaggregate the various levels of interactions among the elements of the system and analyse the unfolding of innovation in higher education.</p> <p>Successful innovative practices build on an interplay between national/regional and institutional factors.</p>		

Published as an annex to the Final Report of the Study on Innovation in Youth Work by MOVIT, Slovenian National Agency for Erasmus+, youth field, and the European Solidarity Corps, on behalf of the European Academy on Youth Work partnership, December 2021. www.eayw.net

