

Futures of Youth Work

Become a Signal Spotter for the EAYW Foresight Project!

What will youth work look like in 2050?

If there will be youth work in 2050, what will it look like? What role will the youth workers have? What competencies will they hold? What infrastructures will need to be created to support them? In light of the complex and rapidly evolving challenges our societies face, the importance of conducting research into the future of youth work cannot be overstated. The Futures of Youth Work Project is an investment into futures thinking that aims to consider and shape the future of youth work in ways that align with the needs of a fast-changing world.

Horizon Scanning

To envision the future, the Futures of Youth Work Project will engage 'Signal Spotters' to conduct a Horizon Scan. Horizon Scanning is a powerful methodology that involves identifying and analysing emerging trends, drivers of change, patterns, and potential disruptions that will shape the landscape of youth work in the coming decades. By exploring these signals of change, we can gain a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, allowing us to better prepare for the future and adapt our practices accordingly.

What is a Signal?

In the context of future foresight research, a signal refers to a piece of information or an early indicator that suggests the possibility of a significant shift or emerging trend in a particular domain. It can be a pattern, event, observation, technology, behaviour, or any other observable phenomenon that carries potential meaning for the future. Signals act as important clues or warnings that help signal spotters and decision-makers identify and interpret potential changes, enabling them to anticipate future challenges and opportunities.

Who is a Signal Spotter?

Signal Spotters do not need to be experts in youth work or foresight methodologies. We value unique insights and diverse perspectives that will enrich our vision of the future. All you need is a good sense of observation and a creative ability to make sense of the signals you spot. The entire process will be thoroughly explained during a virtual onboarding session, which will help you to understand and get into your role as a Signal Spotter.

Your commitment will involve devoting time over a few weeks for collecting and sharing your valuable insights and observations. You can be flexible in how you structure it - it can be 15 minutes each day or a couple of hours each week to gather insights. By participating in this collaborative effort, you will have the opportunity to contribute to exploring the future of youth work, develop your future literacy and future-thinking mindset and connect with like-minded professionals.

As a Signal Spotter, you will systematically scan and monitor diverse information sources to identify and interpret signals within your field of expertise and beyond, and share your observations with the research team. Your role will be vital in identifying early indicators and providing insights into potential future developments. This can include monitoring advancements in technology, shifts in societal attitudes, policy developments, and innovative practices. For example, a signal spotter might observe the increasing use of virtual reality in youth engagement programmes or the growing emphasis on mental health and well-being in youth work approaches.

By observing, analysing, and reporting signals, you will contribute to a deeper understanding of the future landscape of youth work and help inform strategic decision-making and proactive planning for the well-being and success of young people. Embrace the opportunities and challenges ahead, and together, let's shape a brighter future for the youth in Europe!

Please take note of the following key dates:

7 th /8 th September 2023	A virtual onboarding session to help you to understand and get into your role as a Signal Spotter (the sessions are repeated on the 7 th and the 8 th , so you will attend only one)
11 th September - 31 st October 2023	Horizon Scanning
February 2024 (date to be defined)	Workshop examining themes emerging from the Horizon Scan (optional)

To express your interest in becoming a Signal Spotter for the Futures of Youth Work Project, please express your interest by filling out the [registration form](#) by **6th August 2023**. We will notify all Signal Spotters by mid-August.

We kindly ask you to **circulate this invitation within your network of colleagues and contacts** who might also be interested in contributing to this innovative project. The more diverse perspectives we gather, the more comprehensive our vision of the future of youth work will be.

Futures of Youth Work in the context of the EAYW

Futures of Youth Work is a research project undertaken by the European Academy on Youth Work, a strategic cooperation of National Agencies of the Erasmus+ programme, youth field, and the European Solidarity Corps and SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres.

The EAYW aims to promote the development of quality youth work, to support its capacity to react to current and future developments, and to contribute to creating a common ground on youth work and youth work policy. To this end, **it focuses on supporting innovation in youth work**, as a response to the trends, challenges and uncertainties faced by young people in today's fast-changing societies.

The 3rd residential EAYW event will be held in Slovenia from 14 – 17 May 2024. It will include a verification of the outcomes of the Futures for Youth Work project with around 150 participants.

More information: www.eayw.net; Sonja.mitter@movit.si (project coordination)

