

Resonance workshop report

Kranjska Gora, 17-19.06.2025

FROM SURVIVAL TO
SHAPING THE
FUTURE(S)



European Academy on Youth Work

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1.

WHAT WAS
THE
WORKSHOP
ABOUT?

The world seems to become increasingly divided, led by and navigating opposing perspectives, systemic inertia, and very rapid societal shifts. As with many other fields, youth work is heavily impacted by these dynamics.

Too often, youth work seems to be caught between having to constantly react (to changes, to challenges, to crises, to imposed priorities, etc.) while defending its core purpose and the current ways of working (the current leading practices, structures, and assumptions that shape youth work today). **How can youth work make a shift towards proactively shaping its futures that reflect the changing needs and aspirations of young people and the world around us while remaining true to the core purpose and identity of youth work?** What needs reviewing, and what needs co-creation?

Youth work has always been about empowering young people, fostering engaged and active citizenship, and promoting participation in society with a critical mind and a commitment to living ethics and values. However, because of growing complexity and increasing challenges, **the futures of youth work will need to be based on a long-wanted shift from the individual to the idea of more interconnectedness, global awareness, and a sense of wholeness.**

Youth work must develop to recognise and strengthen the links between personal development, communities, and the wider world.

Building on the **Futures of Youth Work research** conducted by the **European Academy on Youth Work** (EAYW) and drawing on the ideas of systemic change, this workshop invited youth workers, educators, and creative minds to reflect upon the notions of ‘what is’ (looking from the future) rather than ‘what should be’ (looking at the future). It assumed that a better comprehension of the complex and interconnected dynamics of youth work’s present (and to a certain extent, past) supports sensing and shaping a sustainable youth work that remains a driver of empowerment, connection, and social transformation.

However, this workshop was not designed to be just a ‘conversation space’ or to present conclusions. It did not offer a blueprint for the futures of youth work either. **What it offered instead was a space: to slow down, think, reflect, feel, and imagine what it means to practise youth work in a world that is changing rapidly and sometimes chaotically.** And to ask ourselves: how do we make sense of that change, and how do we work with it?

WHY AND WHY NOW?

The workshop was set up with **four concrete intentions**:

- *To take the Futures of Youth Work research a step further*
- *To explore the relevance of emerging trends in youth work contexts today and in the years ahead*
- *To offer hands-on experience with methods and tools for working with futures*
- *To explore how the purpose of youth work itself may be evolving*

The **main idea** was for the participants to somewhat ‘re-create’ parts of the research experience itself, for instance, the mindset of the signal spotter, or exploring horizons and types of futures, and to observe what is shifting in society and what that might mean for youth work.

This approach is in line with the EAYW’s broader intention to offer spaces for **collective exploration and reflection on trends and developments, and to stimulate innovative responses** from and within the field of youth work.

The questions we raised

The organising team prepared the work around a few guiding questions:

- Is youth work “stuck” in survival mode?
- What keeps it there?
- How do we shift from reaction to shaping?
- What conditions are needed for youth work to become future-ready?

All participants who joined the workshops have been asked to prepare themselves in two ways:

- by reading the *Futures of Youth Work* research, and
- by sharing prior arrivals and after conversations with peers, family, and friends, reflections about how global changes are impacting youth work.

The results of those conversations have been collected on a [Padlet](#) and are also accessible in this report.

	17.06	18.06	19.06	20.06
Morning (9:30 – 13:00)	Welcome and setting the scene Mapping the group Getting into a signal spotter mindset' Step into the field - Mapping the trends – my context	'Signal spotter check-in' Meeting or potential Exploring the Types of Futures (1)	Check in Rethinking the future of youth work Exploring the individual and collective developments.	Departures
Lunch break	Lunch break	Lunch break	Lunch break	
Afternoon (14:30 - 18:00)	Horizon scanning Exploring the fields of change Reflection talks	Exploring the Types of Futures (2) How are we in the process? Reflection talks	Meta reflection on the process and the methods Closing and evaluation	
Dinner	Dinner out 20:00	Dinner in 19:00	Dinner in 19:00	
Evening	Free	Free	Free	

THE EXPLORATION QUESTIONS OF PARTICIPANTS

- Space was given for participants to voice what were/are questions they came with. The idea was not only to give them visibility and legitimacy, but also to explore how those questions might change throughout the workshop.
- Those questions were:
 - How can the collected research data be used for a practical "solution" in our youth work?
 - What is a step forward in the context of quality youth work, which doesn't prioritise "professional" youth work concerning volunteer or youth-led youth work?
 - How can I use innovative youth work practices in grassroots activist work?
(Do I want to?)
 - What can I focus on in the youth field to bring a meaningful impact?
 - Is Youthwork able to withstand the socio-economic pressure regarding the recent war and productivity threats? (Is it wild enough to maintain?)
 - Has youth work lost the run of itself? Is everyone now a youth worker? Is everything now youth work?
 - Youth Work → Training → Human Development (Adolescence and early adulthood), Non-formal education, Skills, Ethical issues, etc. → Respond to the needs of youngsters → Preventive planning (avoid problems)
 - Power shifting → Transcending ageism & tokenism... in Youth Work by naming existing practices
 - Future of youth work: Differences and difficulties youth workers face in different countries / to gain the skills and knowledge that my youth work needs in my country, or learn from others (we hope it answers)
 - What is there that we have in the present that we can build on for the future of youth work? (learning from different perspectives)
 - How can youth work adapt and assert itself in a rapidly changing world while ensuring inclusion, autonomy and respect for human rights?
 - How can youth work adapt and assert itself in a rapidly changing world while ensuring inclusion, autonomy and respect for human rights?
 - Should we, the 'Youth Workers', shape the future of youth, or maybe they know what they need?
 - Can youth get out of 'state' paternity to bypass the survival?
 - Is there a need & space for body shape & size discrimination in the future of youth work? Is it relevant? Does it fit to current and future trends?
 - In a changing world, what are we youth workers actively doing that youth work keeps up with the change, and doesn't just long for the past?
 - How can youth work move from reacting to a global crisis to actually shaping the long-term future?
 - Is youth work elitist? How can we create a joint global path?
 - Do young people need us in the future?
 - How can we learn from each other to solve (future) issues and to demonstrate broadly why youth work is so important?
 - How do we hold on to youth work values and purpose when there is constant pressure to evolve and adapt to a role/purpose decided by other entities/government/etc?

2.

TUNING IN AND
GROUNDING:
MAKING THE
FIELD VISIBLE



Being truthful to systemic work's principles was one of the wishes of the team, which means being mindful about exercises and methods and making sure, where possible, to bring them one step further.

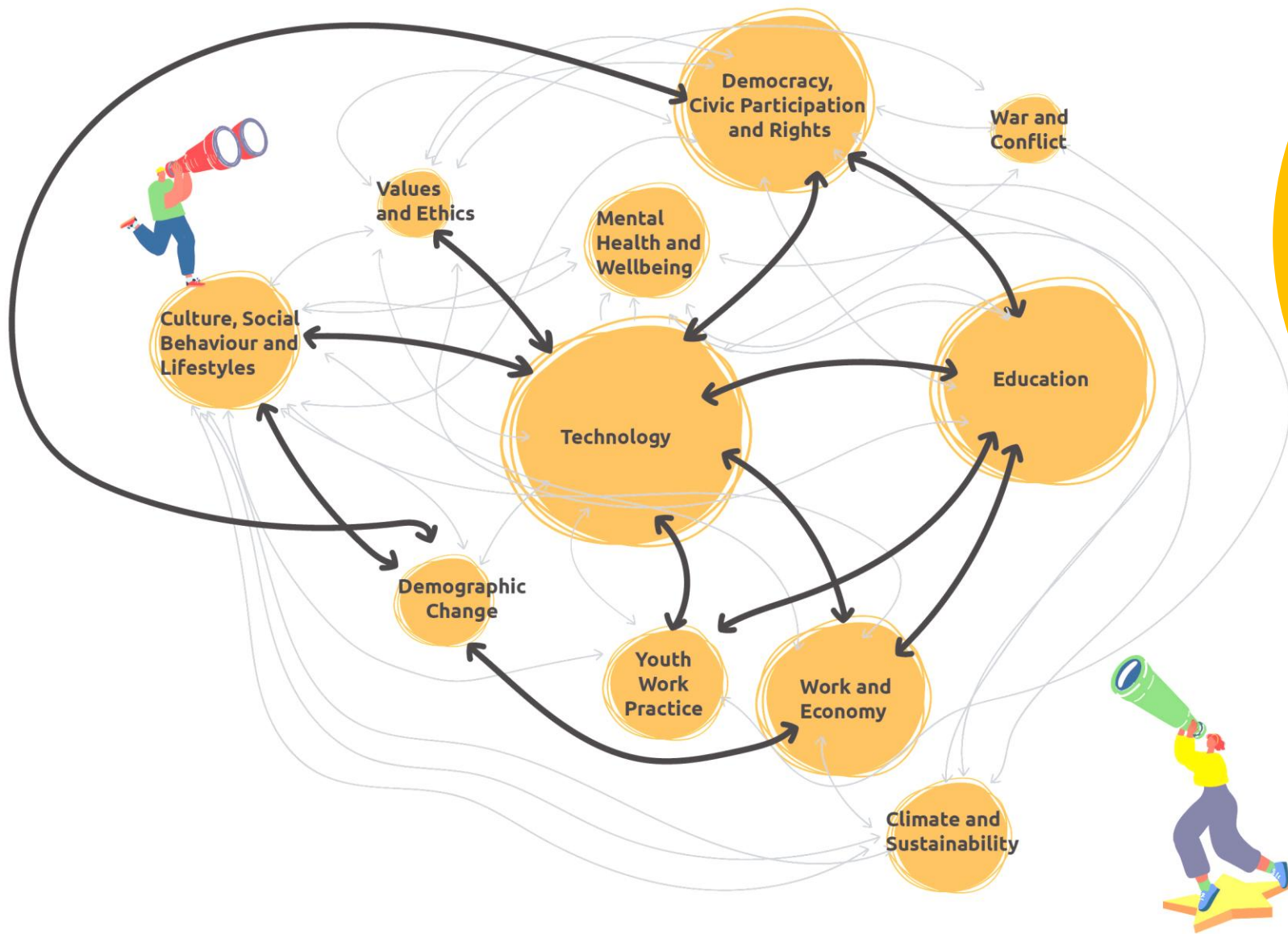
Hence, **when the workshop opened with a mapping of who was in the room, connections were added to the geographical positioning.** These connections shed light on professional ties, personal stories, historical heritage and tensions, and remaining, sometimes shared, struggles.

The message behind was that ***'everyone has a place. And every connection, even the painful ones, has a place too.'***

This act of visualising and honouring complexity and the past became a recurrent theme throughout the workshop. **Youth work does not exist in a vacuum, in isolation.** It is embedded in systems and shaped by local, national, and European histories and futures.

3.

SIGNAL
SPOTTING:
ENTERING A
DIFFERENT KIND
OF MINDSET



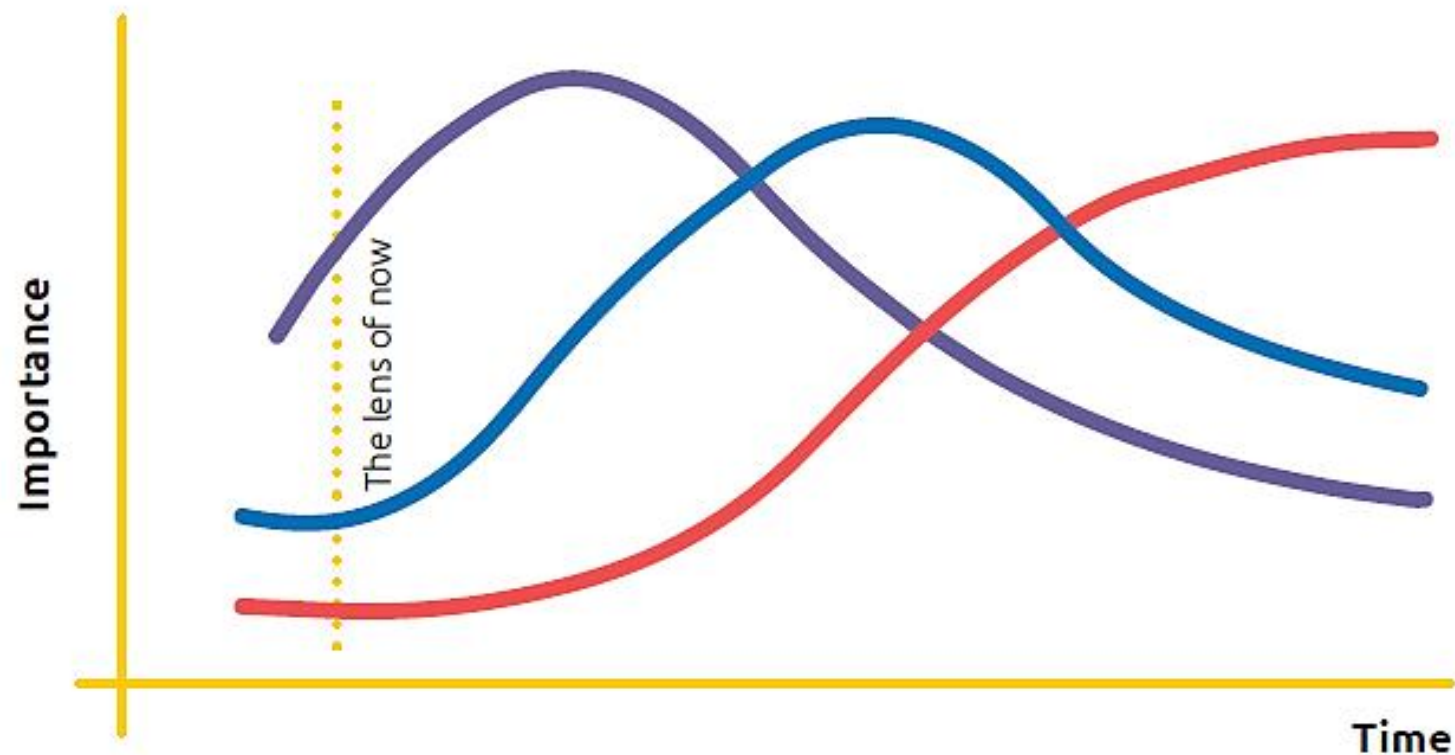
After a guided visualisation inviting the group to be holistically present and to set aside their opinions, judgments and interpretations, the participants **walked around the trends presented earlier, with the invitation to interact with them, and sense what was activated, what was missing, what was silent.** They could add on the map of trends, replicated on the floor.

Following the **presentation of the research on the Futures of Youth Work** and a brief overview of the trends and scenarios that emerged, participants could experiment **getting into the mindset of a signal spotter** – a key element of the research, which invites to observe and sense what is:

- **Loud:** the visible, well-documented trends (e.g. AI, mental health, demographic shifts)
- **Less loud:** changes that are visible in some places but not yet dominant
- **Whispering:** early indicators of deep shifts that are just beginning to surface

As a natural next step and using the reflections on the state of the world and its impact on youth work, participants have been invited, in groups, to practice horizon scanning. The flow of that session meant to first go through a few of the contributions (different one in each group), zoom out and sense what did the bigger picture look like, what did it say, and what were the **key forces, disturbances, drivers impacting the future of youth work** (that cannot be ignored).

Once done, they have been asked to place those 'driving forces' on the corresponding horizon.



Source:
UK Government Office for Science. (2017)
'The Futures Toolkit'



The Near Future

Many drivers are visibly in place, even if we've not made sense of them yet.



A Further Future

Trends are beginning to emerge, but its exact form is not yet clear.

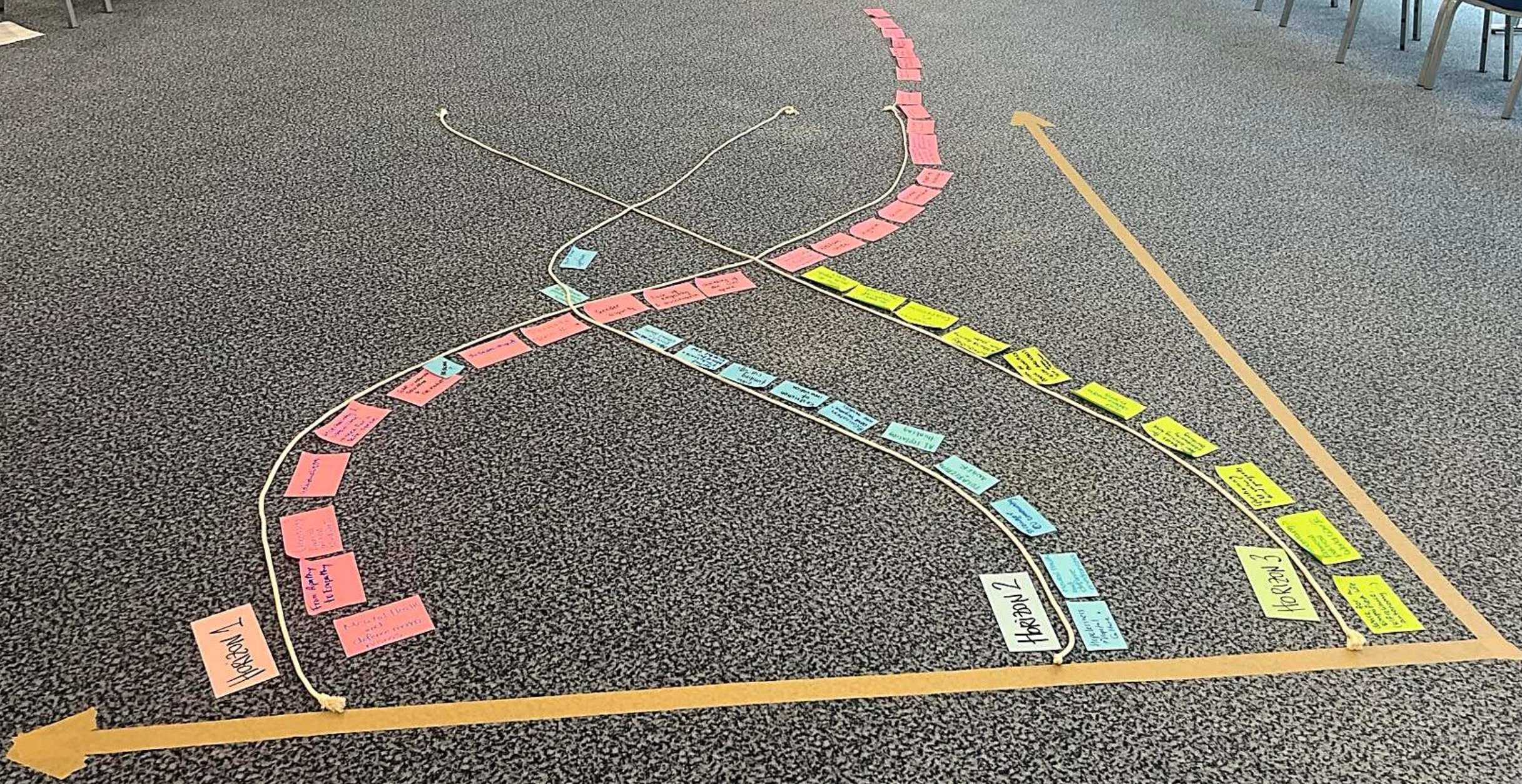


The Distant Future

There are no discernable patterns. It is difficult to separate signals from background noise.

THE KEY FORCES IDENTIFIED

- The youth field is not getting into the roots to create impact → The field is overwhelmed (with priorities)
- We do 'everything', hence nothing.
- There is a possibility for the field to focus (we are diverse enough)
- Values is becoming an issue
- Youthology ('Reverse Roles') (both ways)
- We are going back in history (it was 'better'...)?
- Cooperation vs. Competition
- Public funding cuts
- Individualism vs. Collective
- What does the picture (big picture) say/tell?
- Welfare state cannot be ignored (= basis!) → 'Welfare state in CRISIS'
- What does 'authentic' youth work look like?
- Instability & young people are disappointed in life / how the world is
- Multiple crises → no time left to address 'the rest' → Pressing emergencies
- The social contract is broken
- 'Everybody is becoming a youth worker' ('It is not youth work as we knew it.') → Shift of youth work identity
- Instability mixing adaptability
- We are not talking about ourselves, the relevance and adequacy of our work



Horizon 1

Horizon 2

Horizon 3

Outcomes H1

- Migration
- Welfare state
- Global conflicts
- Raising polarization and inequalities emerge bigger/further problems
- Disempowerment of human beings
- Role of Youth Workers in conflict management
- Loneliness, isolation of young people
- Young people behaving disrespectfully
- Digitalisation leading to a lack of social skills
- Youth Work as poor cousin of Social Work
- Divided Youth Services
- Doubting about the conventional way of living
- Uncertainty: financial, political, World War III
- Team approach to empathy
- Mental health and defence mechanisms
- Gender disparity
- Promote mental health
- Social guarantee doesn't exist anymore
- Shift becomes normalized
- Diverse of information
- Desensitized, outgrouping
- Impact of technology
- Opportunities & independence of youth with mental, physical disabilities
- Uncertainty & instability → need for a safe space
- Shrinking of the civic space
- Lack of empathy & discrimination
- Individualism
- GAP in between education & job market

Outcomes H2

- Stronger EU community
- Polarization and “negative” role models
- Digital exclusion + need for digital YW (Youth Work)
- Youth Work = Lighthouse
- Mismatch between education system and job market
- Mental health and defence mechanisms
- AI replacing thinking
- Polarization + anger
- Public funding cut-offs
- Restriction of innovation
- Neo-localism from/in Global South
- Hopelessness → hopeful culture?

Outcomes H3

- YOUTHODOLOGY → adult learning from youth
- Questioning EU values and projects
- Desire for a simplified life (self-reliance, autonomy...)
- Unfair view on youth populations
- Mental health and defence mechanisms
- Uncertainty: financial, political (World War III)
- Small spaces for learning and community building
- Cooperation vs Competition
- Youth Work as the poor cousin of social work
- Shifting in donor priorities (given agendas), fear-driven, instrumentalism

4.

MAPPING
RESPONSES TO
CHANGE



Constant Change: Refers to the ongoing nature of change in modern environments, where adapting to new circumstances is a frequent necessity.



Denial: The initial reaction to change, where individuals may refuse to acknowledge or accept that a change is happening. This can manifest as disbelief or a sense of shock.



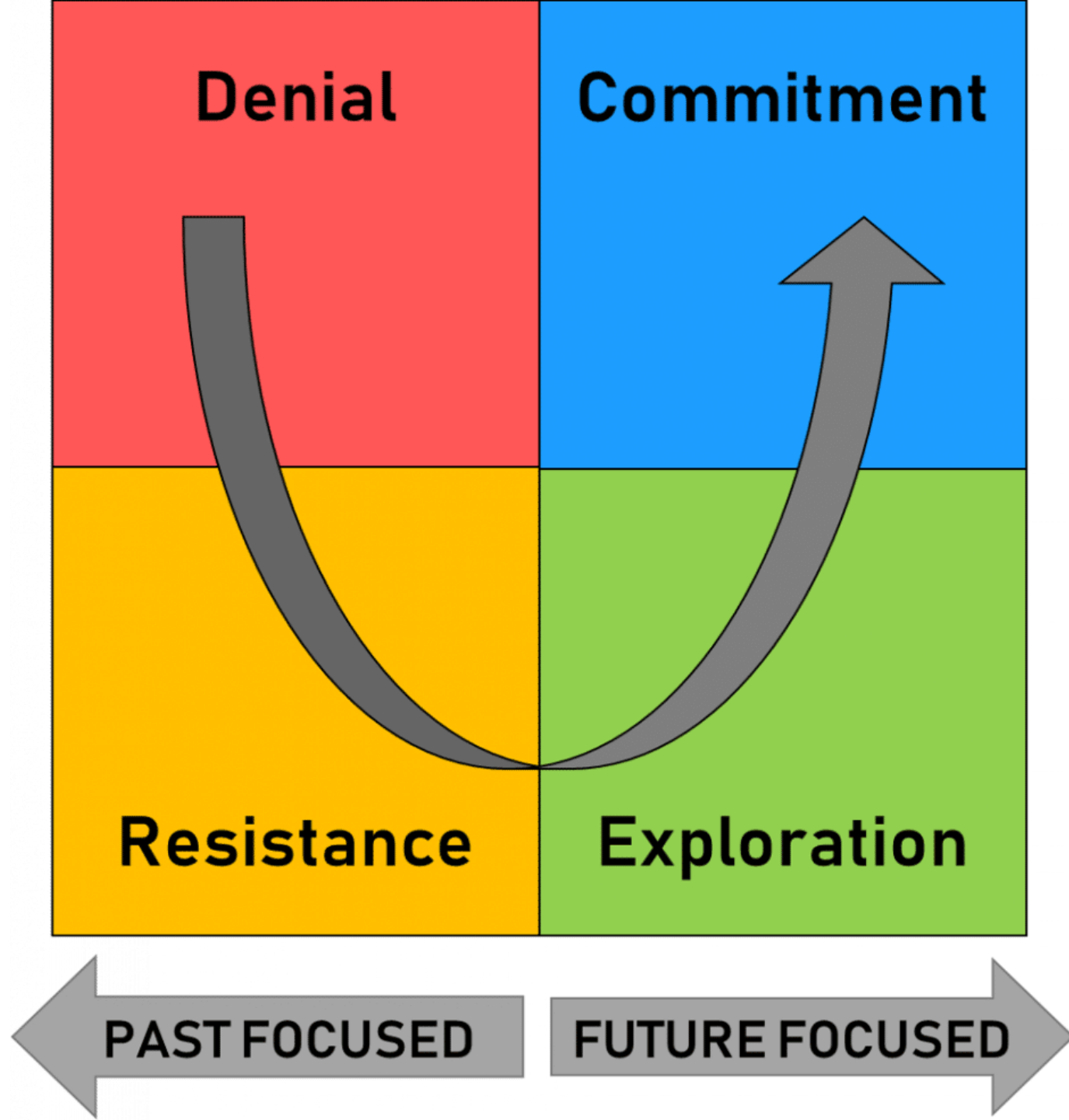
Resistance: Once the reality of change is accepted, individuals may actively or passively resist it. This could involve questioning the change, expressing negativity, or even sabotaging efforts.



Exploration: Following resistance, individuals begin to explore the implications of the change. This involves learning about the new situation, trying new approaches, and potentially making mistakes.



Commitment: The final stage involves a full acceptance and engagement with the change. Individuals become invested in the new ways of working and actively contribute to their success.



5.

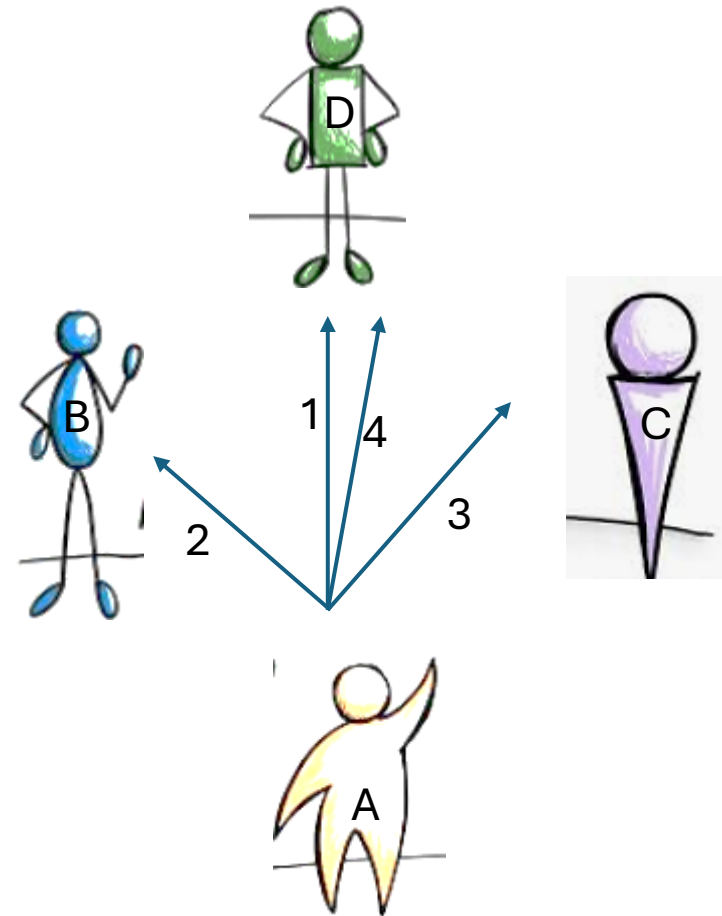
EXPLORING
MINDESET,
FUTURES AND
POSSIBILITIES

MEETING YOUTH WORK'S POTENTIAL

Day two began with a grounding exercise and a **mini constellation**, which invited the group to explore dynamics between what youth work currently is, what it could become, and what it needs to let go of or say yes to. In groups of 4 or 5, they rotated representing the following elements in four movements:

- A - Youth work in my context
- B - What do we need to say YES to
- C - What do we need to say NO to
- D - Potential of youth work

For the groups of 5: E - The holding space person



→ = the order of the movements of A towards D, B and C.

THE PRINCIPLES FOR A FUTURE-READY MINDSET

What we might want to keep in mind...

Readiness to question your assumptions (why are things the way they are, why do I believe that things are the way they are, etc).

Practice curiosity and be courageous (being courageous to stay with not knowing, while receiving what comes)

Get comfortable with ambiguity and multiple perspectives (share your true thoughts in a lively discussion and carefully listen to the other at the same time).

Suspend judgment (keep an open mind, be aware of pre-judgment and bias and their impact, etc).

Be creative, work fast and generate as many ideas as possible. Do not disregard anything.

Look for pockets (seeds) of the future in the present.

Embrace the long view (envision a long-term future when many things can change, etc).

Be careful when 'predicting' the future: we do NOT predict the future (though broad predictions are possible, especially if closer in time). We would rather explore scenarios and probable eventualities.

Use different sources of knowing: body senses, intuition, feeling, thoughts...

Keep the question "How can we make this a reality?" for last (for later). The future comes first, and action comes later.

EXPLORING THE TYPES OF FUTURES

The emerging future

This future becomes visible through signals already present in our world today. It invites us to sense what is unfolding with curiosity, offering a benevolent lens on transformation. It is long-term focused.

The upcoming future

The upcoming future seems like an inevitable horizon: the one we are gradually approaching, no matter our intentions or interventions. It calls for recognition and readiness. It is medium and long-term-focused.

The 'plannable' future

This is the future we feel empowered to shape. It is driven by strategic thinking and action, where we emphasise our sense of agency and influence through intentional decisions and design. It is short-term focused.

The projected future

The projected future is rooted in continuation rather than disruption. It is 'business as usual' and reflects what happens when past patterns and present systems are simply continued. It is short-term focused.

The preferable future

This future is guided by our hopes, values, ideals, judgment, what is right and wrong, assumptions, etc. It is about what we want to see rather than what we expect, and it therefore contrasts with undesirable outcomes or an 'unpreferable' (undesirable) future. It is medium/short-term focused.

(Our) potential future

This is the future of possibility and purpose, shaped by a wide range of 'what we might become'. It calls for the importance of the awareness of that potential within the bigger picture/larger context, for an in-depth reflection on our place in a larger environment and for transformative growth. It is long-term focused.

The possible/probable future

This future considers what might realistically unfold based on what we know today and the evidence we have. It relies on thinking about what could/will/might be and challenges us to navigate the future with clarity and pragmatism. It is short and medium-focused.

Participants were introduced to different '**types of futures**': projected, planable, preferable, emerging, upcoming, potential, and possible/probable.

Each of these offers a different angle from which to look at the future, and each brings its limitations and strengths.

Walking through these 'futures islands' physically helped participants explore their emotional reactions and intuitive connections to each type.

For example:

- **Planable** future often felt safe but limited.
- **Emerging** future can be energising, but also ambiguous.
- **Preferable** future can trigger idealism and sometimes frustration.



Emerging future - “No Longer Silence: A Story from the 16th European Academy of Youth Work” (i)

It was a cool June morning in Kranjska Gora, and the mountains shimmered in the distance as if aware that something extraordinary was unfolding beneath their watch. The 16th Edition of the European Academy of Youth Work (EAYW) had begun, and for the first time in its history, a pool shimmered invitingly outside the venue while the comforting hum of air conditioning greeted guests from all corners of the world.

This year’s theme – “NO LONGER SILENCE: Resilience, Rights and Regeneration” – resonated through every corridor and workshop room. It wasn’t just a conference. It was a movement.

Among the first to arrive, in what many described as a surreal scene straight from a sci-fi documentary, was the delegation from the Palestinian Youth Work Federation.

They disembarked from a sleek, humming Artificial Intelligence airplane, having just landed from Gaza International, now operational thanks to international peace and innovation efforts. Clad in both tradition and tech, they brought only open minds – as the rules were clear: no work from home countries allowed, so everyone could fully immerse in the shared experience.

And immerse they did.

Inside, participants moved between sessions aided by real-time AI-assisted translation, offering simultaneous interpretation in all languages. English and Chinese served as the official tongues, but there was something beautiful about hearing greetings in Wolof, Sami, Quechua, and Catalan floating in the air.



Emerging future - “No Longer Silence: A Story from the 16th European Academy of Youth Work” (ii)

The methodology had an interesting twist: a very old-school escape room, where participants had to “break out” using codes rooted in human rights declarations and generational wisdom. Laughter and frustration echoed equally through the halls as youth workers from Greenland, the Canary Country, and the recently reunited United Kingdom of England and Wales cracked puzzles together.

The transformation of Europe post-migration was at the heart of many sessions. Youth workers were leading innovative programmes, like Migration, Mobility & Belonging, focusing on displaced youth, environmental refugees, and the new generation of stateless teens. These young people, uprooted by climate disasters or geopolitical shifts, were being woven into the social fabric through empathy, support networks, and youth-led activism.

A sense of quiet astonishment spread when California, now part of the New Mexican Alliance, sent its special envoy. Her speech about tech, nature, and soulfulness made many pause. It made more sense when we remembered: Silicon Valley is now located in Helsinki – after the great Tech Relocation Agreement of 2032. The future was truly now.

This wasn't just about talk – the Youth, Peace & Security Agenda was officially implemented across all 65 EU nations, including those with recently adjusted status. Youth from across Europe – old and new, defined and redefined – were creating systems that centered care, justice, and community.

In the midst of it all, a quiet legend walked the grounds: Sonja Mitter, the once-retired youth worker turned beloved Kranjska Gora tour guide. Alongside her, the Prime Ministress of Slovenia, dressed in hiking boots and a wide smile, led a symbolic walk through the forests surrounding the town – a walk originally planned for 2025, brought forward by urgency and spirit. Every participant joined, creating a human chain through the trees, chanting phrases of resilience in dozens of languages.

As twilight fell over the Alpine village, the pool shimmered in silence while the stars above blinked in quiet agreement. The youth weren't just the future. They were the now.

And silence, finally, was no longer an option

Upcoming future – The Story of Livia



My name is Livia, I'm 19, and I live in a mid-sized city. Thursdays are packed, but I don't mind — I like the mix.

I start my day in the co-living unit I share with two other young people. It's not ideal, but with housing prices, it's the only way to have some independence. I grab a quick breakfast and open my mental health check-in app — it's part of our city's youth well-being program. It just takes a minute: mood, energy, one reflection. Today it reminds me to breathe before my tech-free hour.

At 9:00, I join my digital civic engagement workshop. It's hosted by a youth centre but entirely online — a hybrid model is now normal. The facilitator, a trained youth worker, guides us through a simulation about public budgeting. It's fun, but also frustrating — some players always dominate the vote. It reflects reality a bit too well. We talk about polarization. Not in a big, fix-the-world way. Just... how we deal with people in our lives who live in different information bubbles. Nobody really knows how to change it. But at least we talk about it.

Around 11:00, I bike to the local youth hub — it used to be a closed youth centre, but now it's a multi-use space. Some people hang out, others do project work. I like that there's no pressure to always be “productive.” I just sit with some friends and do nothing. That's rare these days.

At noon, I attend a skills-for-the-future lab — part of a national program where youth work meets career guidance. Today's topic: adapting your strengths to AI-dominated workspaces. I'm not sure what I'll do for a job yet, but at least I feel like someone is helping me figure it out.

In the afternoon, I volunteer in a peer support group. We're trying to create safe offline spaces. That's becoming more valuable. Everyone's so glued to screens, even adults. It's hard to be with each other without distraction.

Later, I talk to my youth worker — she's been here for years. She says youth work has changed. It's more professional now, but also more stretched. Less funding, more pressure. Still, she's here. That matters. I end the day back at home. I scroll for too long, even though I know I shouldn't. I try to log out before midnight. That's one of my work-life balance challenges, even though I don't have a job yet. But somehow, we've all started thinking about it early — maybe because we've seen how our parents burned out.

Planable future for youth work: from entertainment to engagement

In the evolving landscape of youth work, we believe the future is something we can actively shape—intentionally, strategically, and with purpose. By 2030, we envision a major event called Youth Trip that brings together international youth work tools and educational practices. This initiative responds directly to the defined framework for 2028–2035, offering space to reflect, adapt, and propose corrections where needed.

As part of this effort, we propose two interconnected platforms: EduFest and YouthFest—interactive fairs where we explore how gamification can be meaningfully integrated into youth work and education systems.

At the heart of this vision is a simple but powerful motto: “Everyone plays.” We see play not just as leisure, but as a serious and inclusive method of learning for all ages. Through board games, video games, and social games, we aim to connect youth with educational institutions, adults, and even policymakers—bridging generational and institutional gaps through play.

This shift from entertainment to engagement is built on proven methods, a solid foundation of youth work practice, and academic backing. We are not just imagining change—we are planning it, using our collective agency to co-create learning experiences that are both fun and deeply impactful

A planable future for youth work



From entertainment to engagement

A preferable future - A Day in the Life at the Youth Centre – The Year 2035 (i)



The sun was shining over the lush green park surrounding the shimmering glass building of the Youth Centre. It wasn't just a building – it was the heart of the community. Everyone called it simply “the Hub.” From the rooftop garden, Zara looked out over the busy scene below, smiling. Today was robotics club day – her favourite.

Downstairs, the air buzzed with energy. Inside, youth of all backgrounds worked side by side: gaming enthusiasts building worlds in virtual reality, young artists splashing colour onto canvases, and a group of teens recording a podcast about climate justice. Laughter rang through the halls. There was no judgment, no bullying, no pressure to fit in. Here, everyone belonged – and everyone was appreciated for exactly who they were.

The workers weren't just staff; they were mentors, friends, and co-dreamers. And they were finally being paid fairly for the powerful work they did.

Outside, two boys played soccer in the field while a quiet conversation took place on a shaded bench between two friends – one of whom was in a wheelchair. Accessibility wasn't an afterthought anymore; it was everywhere. Even the self-driving mobile youth unit was designed for everyone, ready to bring the Hub's spirit to even the most remote neighborhoods.

Online, a different kind of energy pulsed. A digital youth worker checked in on a group chat with LGBTQ+ teens discussing identity and support, while another moderated a gaming forum helping players build confidence through teamwork and creativity. The virtual spaces were just as vibrant and real as the physical ones.

A preferable future - A Day in the Life at the Youth Centre – The Year 2035 (ii)

But it wasn't just about fun. Youth-led councils were in constant conversation with city, national, and EU leaders. Many decision-makers were young themselves. Debates were encouraged, and voices once ignored now helped shape the future.

The Youth Center was self-sustaining too – with a lively café, a bike repair workshop, and donations flowing in from former youth who had gone on to thrive, thanks to the support they'd once received here. Public funds supported the salaries, but the energy came from the community.

The golden rule? Decisions were made together – youth and workers, hand in hand. When someone needed help beyond what the center could give, they were gently guided to trustworthy, supportive services. The work wasn't about fixing young people. It was about standing beside them as they discovered their strength.

EXPLORING THE TYPES OF FUTURES

Participants' takeaways



Looking at futures from seven different perspectives was really motivating. It helped us think in broader ways, though there's also a risk of stepping into areas that aren't really our responsibility. Still, exploring different future stories allowed us to focus on the present and how we feel now, which actually helped ease some anxiety.



The idea of there being seven types of futures was interesting, and it made us wonder if there might be even more. If the stories we create change over time, it could be valuable to revisit and update them later. Doing this kind of work helps bring us a bit closer to the future we're imagining.



In one session, we felt really 'in it', especially when talking about a possible future. That made things feel closer and helped us feel more confident. We were discussing things already happening now, which shifted our outlook from a darker view to a more hopeful one. It made the future feel more possible.



This experience helped expand our understanding of what the future could look like. It made us think about our roles in that future and how we might want to be involved. It even prompted some of us to consider making changes.



Overall, it was a really useful exercise. It allowed space for imagination and creativity. And at a group level, it was interesting to exchange ideas, the fact that the exercise wasn't too personal made it easier to engage with. It helped us open up and dream a bit more about what the future could be.

TALKING ABOUT A SENSE OF AGENCY....

In the context of the workshop, a sense of agency refers to the awareness and confidence that we can intentionally influence and shape the systems we are part of.

It involves recognising one's role, responsibility, and capacity to act within sometimes complex interdependencies, while understanding that change often requires collaboration, diligence, and the ability to navigate uncertainty and resistance.

This sense of agency is the first necessary realisation to drive meaningful and sustainable transformation.

The flipchart on the right illustrates the resources that participants identified to support their sense of agency.

SENSE OF AGENCY: ^(RE) SOURCES

- * DATA & EVIDENCE
- * BELIEF IN COLLECTIVE SHAPING/IMPACT
- * THINKING ABOUT HOW IT MIGHT BE
- * HUMOR & METAPHORS
- * BEING IN TUNE WITH THE POTENTIAL
- * PLANING AS CONTROL/BEING IN CONTROL
- * REFRAMING & GETTING OUT OF THE AUTOMATIC MODE/AWARE OF THINKING
- * SEEING TRANSFORMATION AS A PART OF EVOLVING
- * HAVING VALUES AS AN INNER COMPASS

6.

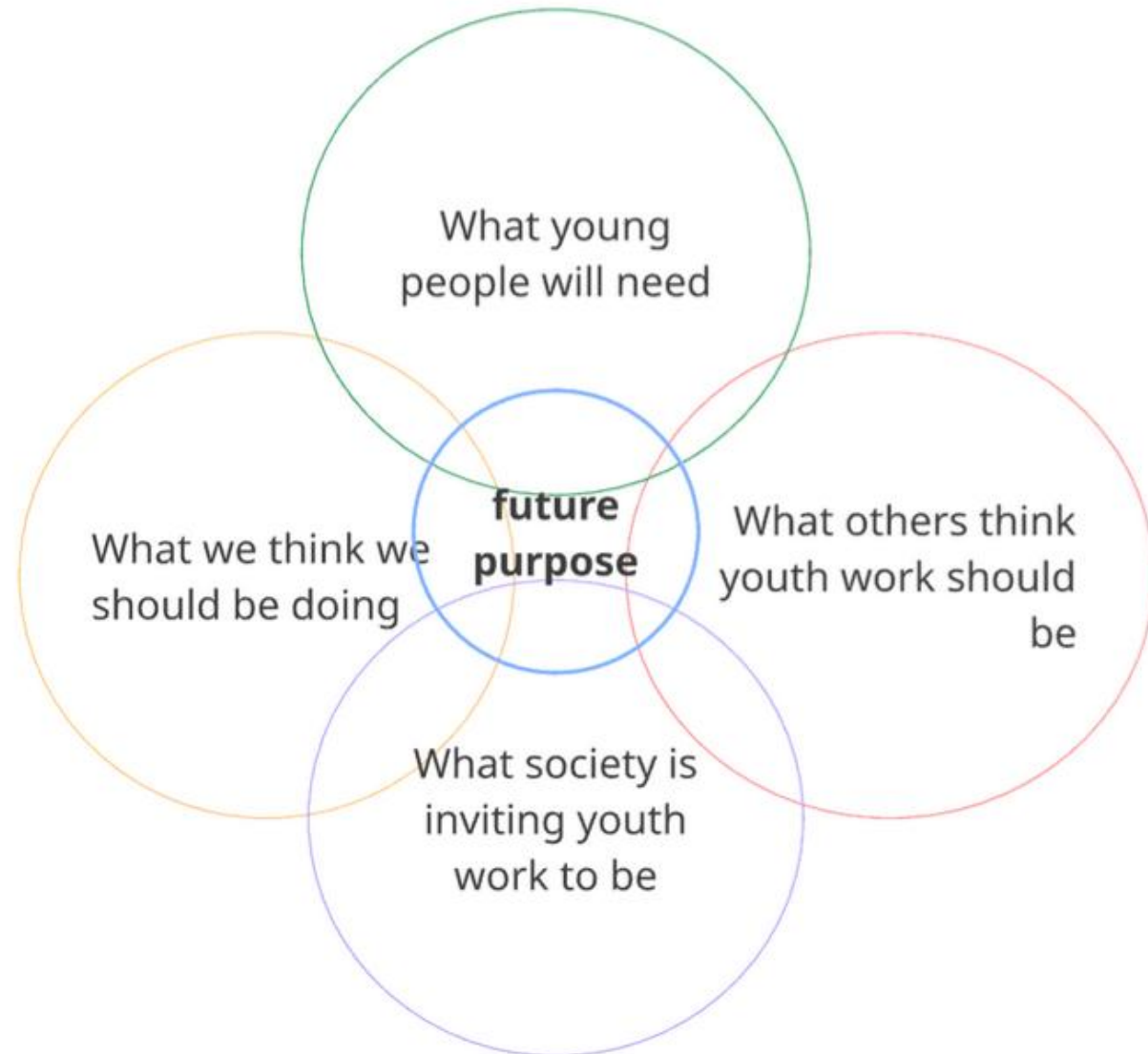
RECLAIMING
THE PURPOSE
OF YOUTH
WORK

EXPLORING THE PURPOSE FROM DIFFERENT VIEWPOINTS

On the final day, attention turned to the deeper question of **purpose**. Using the model of four intersecting circles, participants reflected on:

- What they think youth work should be doing
- What young people need
- What society is calling youth work to be
- What others (e.g. funders, institutions) expect from youth work

This was a moment to step back and reconsider the very foundation of the practice. *What assumptions still serve us? What do we need to let go of? What boundaries are we choosing—and why?*



7.

FUTURE-
READINESS:
INNER AND
OUTER WORK

The workshop closed with an exploration of **future readiness**, based on a four-quadrant model (individual–collective, inner–outer).

The participants rotated through the quadrants, generating strategies for:

- Supporting individual transformation
- Shifting organisational cultures
- Influencing systems and structures
- Cultivating inner awareness and resilience

	Inner work	Outer work
Individual level	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Future-ready mindset▪ Youth workers' awareness▪ Youth worker identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Youth work practices▪ Tools and methods▪ Youth worker skills
Collective level	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Values and principles▪ Existing patterns▪ Purpose and social role	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Policies and strategies▪ Support structures▪ Links and connections

Stop to evaluate and plan for the future
Setting priorities and saying “no”
Knowing that we have a support network
Have belief in the younger generation of youth workers
Onboarding and knowledge management processes
Less “firefighting”
Transform from individualism to collective, collaborative, inclusive work
Keep the focus on young people
Co-creation – trends and ideas with young people
Don’t try to reinvent the wheel!
Invest in youth workers’ knowledge
Embrace potential (instead of fearing it :))
To be curious
Plan and dedicate time for future thinking! Exchange with peers
Common values
Pragmatism
Perspective
Consciousness
Inside forward signal spotters: shift perceptions, structures
Being aware of what we assume
Seek knowledge – be aware of what you don’t know!
It’s okay to learn from youngsters!
Have confidence in your purpose

I-I

Youth work practices? Participation methods, outreach, tools
Promotion/training and improvement
Investment in the professional development of youth workers – it’s also about following up (mentoring, team tracking plans)
Promote human and authentic exchange between youth and youth workers
Communication skills
Adaptability competence
Digital competence
Media literacy
Mentoring and coaching skills
Non-violent communication
Futures thinking
Facilitation skills (safe and trustful learning)
Opportunity for risk-free experimentation
Experiential learning
Humour
Thinking in needs and trends
Lateral thinking education
Reflexivity

I-O

Empathy
Conflicts, wars and violence
Respect
Trust
Inclusion
Diversity
Non-formal education principle
Lifelong learning
Peace
Youth participation
Better indicators (qualitative/values)
Be courageous enough to take one step at a time and think out of the box
Single source of funding – dependency is a blocker
Mentorship and supervision
Capacity building for peace education for youth work
Peace education as priority on EU and national political agendas
Advocate for YPS agenda at EU and national level
To continue with mobility programmes (especially long-term) –
Council of Europe education/learning/mobility
Empathy (duplicate)
Things are still possible: possibility and positivity
Youth – angry, disillusioned?
Find strategies on how to keep and not lose young people
Youth-centred approach
Voluntary engagement

C-I

Legal participation frameworks
Statutory youth provision
GDP is not the only advice
Industries
Inclusion
Dialogue with stakeholders
Funding / support
Final recognition
EU regulation (voice)
Agreed quality standards
Policies for professionalisation and validation of skills for youth workers
Get funding from social & youth-related regulation & companies
Using the YPS (Youth, Peace & Security) example of being an open door for cooperation & innovation
Real participation (participatory design) and proper actions on youth contribution!
Organisations connect more to each other – work on dissemination of research (value mechanisms)
Cross-sectoral cooperation
Awareness raising
More money for YW policies & projects
Precondition: exchange & training for YW
Cooperation with other sectors
Response systems for youth in vulnerability
Recognition of YW at all company

C-O



INSIGHTS FROM
THE TEAM

H3-THINKING IS NOT ABOUT THINKING

The workshop confirms that thinking in terms of the far future (H3) is more difficult than thinking in terms of H1 and H2. It feels as if the present reality shapes the thinking too much, which is limited by the present reality. The source of H3 information could potentially come from other sources of knowing, like sensing or intuition. To be able to do that, the process requires cultivating the 'signal spotter' mindsets, slowing down and connecting to the 'whispering signals' in the field. When everything is happening so fast and anxiety about the future is the 'new normal', learning how to stay with the 'not knowing', the unknown, becomes one of the core future-oriented skills. Moreover, being attuned to what is emerging will allow a better and further exploration of the H3 topics.

SENSE OF STUCKNESS

There is a certain sense of stuckness in the youth work field and a strong resistance to change. There is a danger that youth work will lose its relevance and decline due to keeping the current expiring paradigm(s). Unblocking the process of change first needs a respectful acknowledgement of the youth work history and its original purpose before being able to move towards exploring the potential future purpose of youth work. The sense of stuckness should not be seen as a trouble to fight against, but as a part of the process to be understood, which can serve to unblock the potential of youth work that wants to manifest itself.

VICTIM VS. SOLE CREATOR AND THE SENSE OF AGENCY

As a response to changing realities, youth work tends to get locked in the ‘victim role’, with a diminished sense of agency or taking the other extreme of a ‘sole creator of the future’, with an overblown (and therefore not grounded) sense of agency. In both ways, there are many blind spots, and the result is a stuckness in a pattern that does not allow youth work to evolve. The workshop showed that the way out is to adopt a position of co-creator of the future and a more reflected sense of agency based on various available resources. Clarity of youth work values strengthens its core and provides a compass in navigating the complexities of change, while, at the same time, remaining an open system ready to change and evolve. Such clarity on its authentic core brings the necessary clarity and inner strength.

WHAT IS YOUTH WORK INVITED TO BE(COME)?

The workshop showed that in the current polarised and fragmented world, youth work is invited to create spaces for dialogue amongst young people and for re-learning the sense of interconnectedness between the parts of society, between generations and a global sense of oneness. The topic of ‘values and ethics’ will therefore become even more prominent and require more youth work attention than before. At the same time, this would imply holding spaces for paradoxes and allowing young people’s own exploration of ways to participate in the world. Youth workers may remain role models in living and promoting certain values and ethical standards.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE (a few participants' reflections)

- Keep this kind of meta-reflection: to stop and think about the process. Becoming aware of our patterns and ways of thinking is the content, too.
- To get deeper into some topics, the workshop should be longer, or participants need to be better prepared in advance
- To imagine the far future, include some tools and games that help us imagine beyond the current borders of the present reality
- In our region, we are afraid of future(s). This was eye-opening for me. What can youth workers do to fill in that gap?
- Be more explicit in the call that it is not only about thinking about youth work, but also includes lots of personal engagement work
- Including more history of the group and belonging should be more present in the process
- What are the evidence-based inputs that could be included when thinking about the future

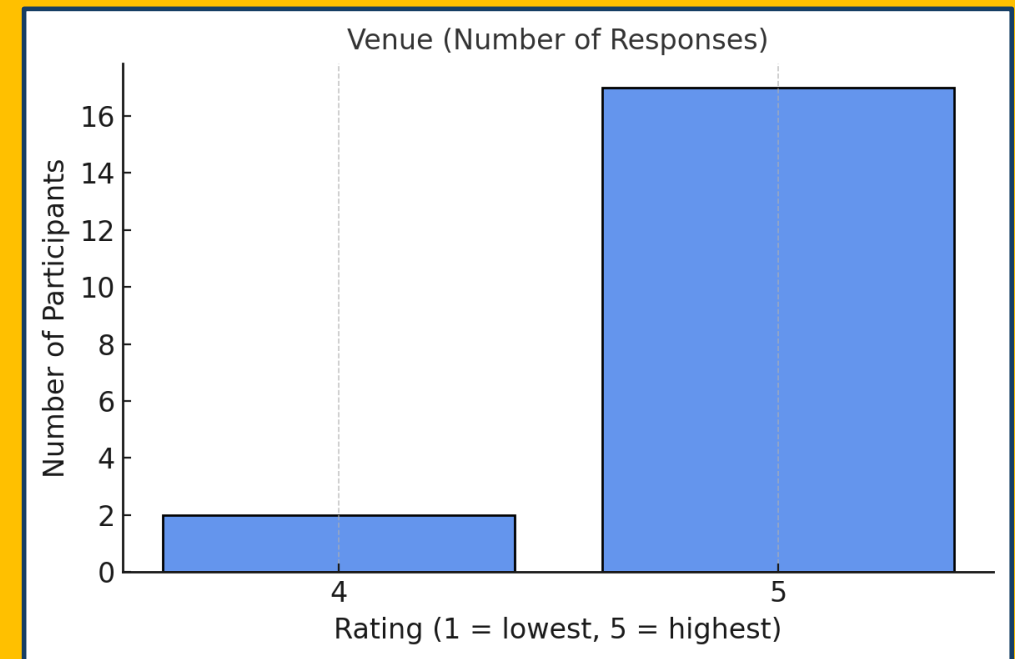
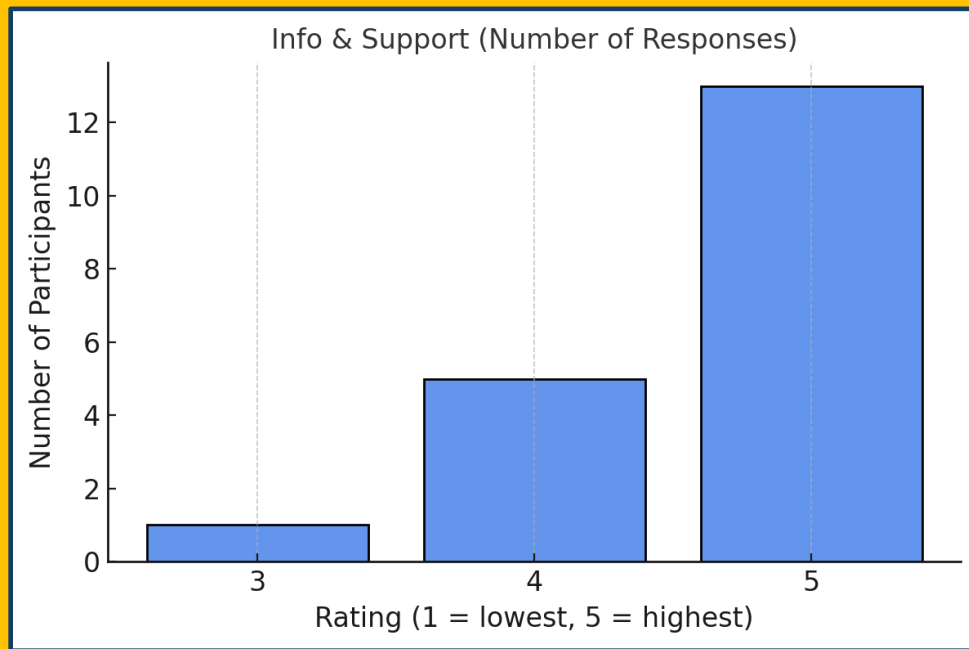
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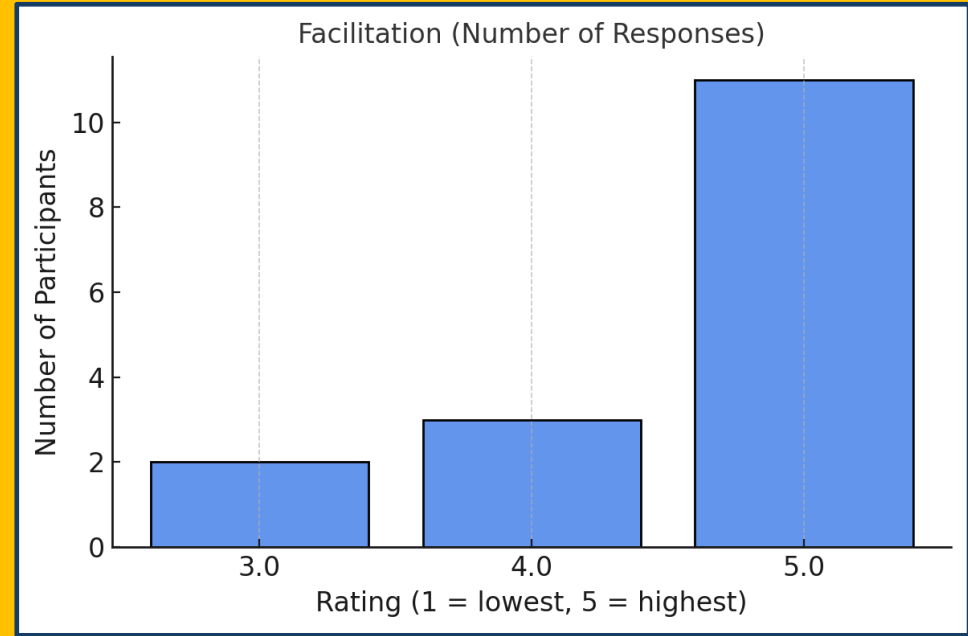
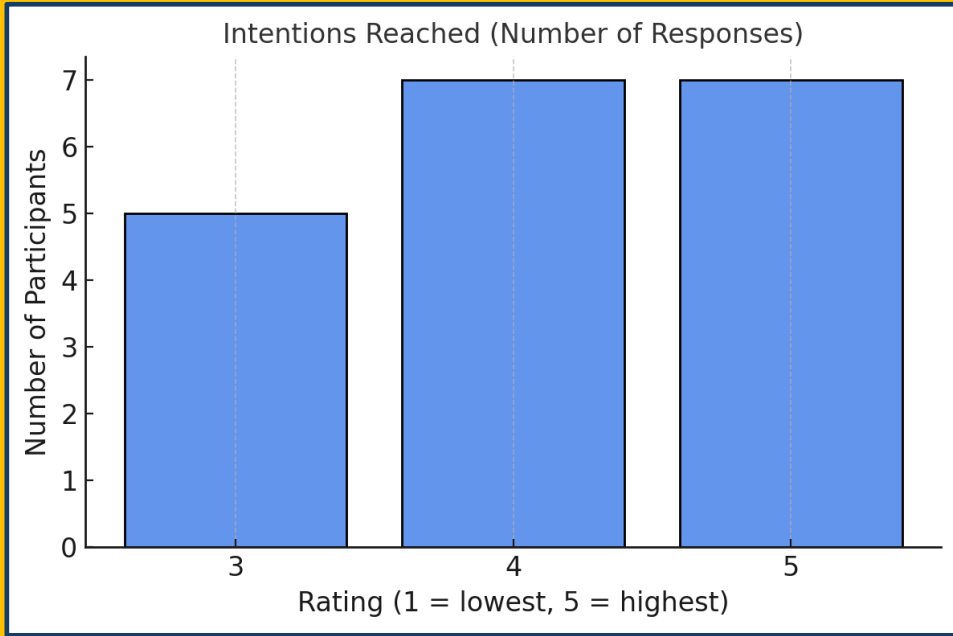
ANNEXES



PARTICIPANTS'
EVALUATION
SUMMARY

In addition to a space to perform a thorough meta-reflection on some key sessions, the participants have filled in an evaluation form. Here are the quantitative and qualitative summaries.





The most valuable learning

Participants highlighted learning about futures tools and models, including the 3 Horizons, quadrants (both), and constellations. The workshop supported reflection, gave the opportunity to explore practical applications, and helped some people to move from uncertainty to clarity. Networking and idea-sharing were also appreciated.

The most interesting and relevant sessions or elements

- Circles (purpose of youth work) and quadrants (both)
- Constellations
- Horizons scanning theory
- Storytelling and types of futures

Participants valued these sessions for offering clarity, depth, and new perspectives.

The least interesting and relevant sessions or elements

Some found the constellation method less engaging, mostly due to personal preferences or discomfort with the format. A few participants noted there were too many reflections or felt certain elements were repetitive or less relevant given their prior experience. The reflection in trios was mentioned once as the least interesting.

What was missing

- Perhaps younger educators
- A clearer overview beforehand (there were minor suggestions for more structure or better communication around the workshop's flow and expectations).
- A (deeper) concluding reflection at the end of the workshop (in addition to the individual meta reflection)

What participants will transfer to their own work

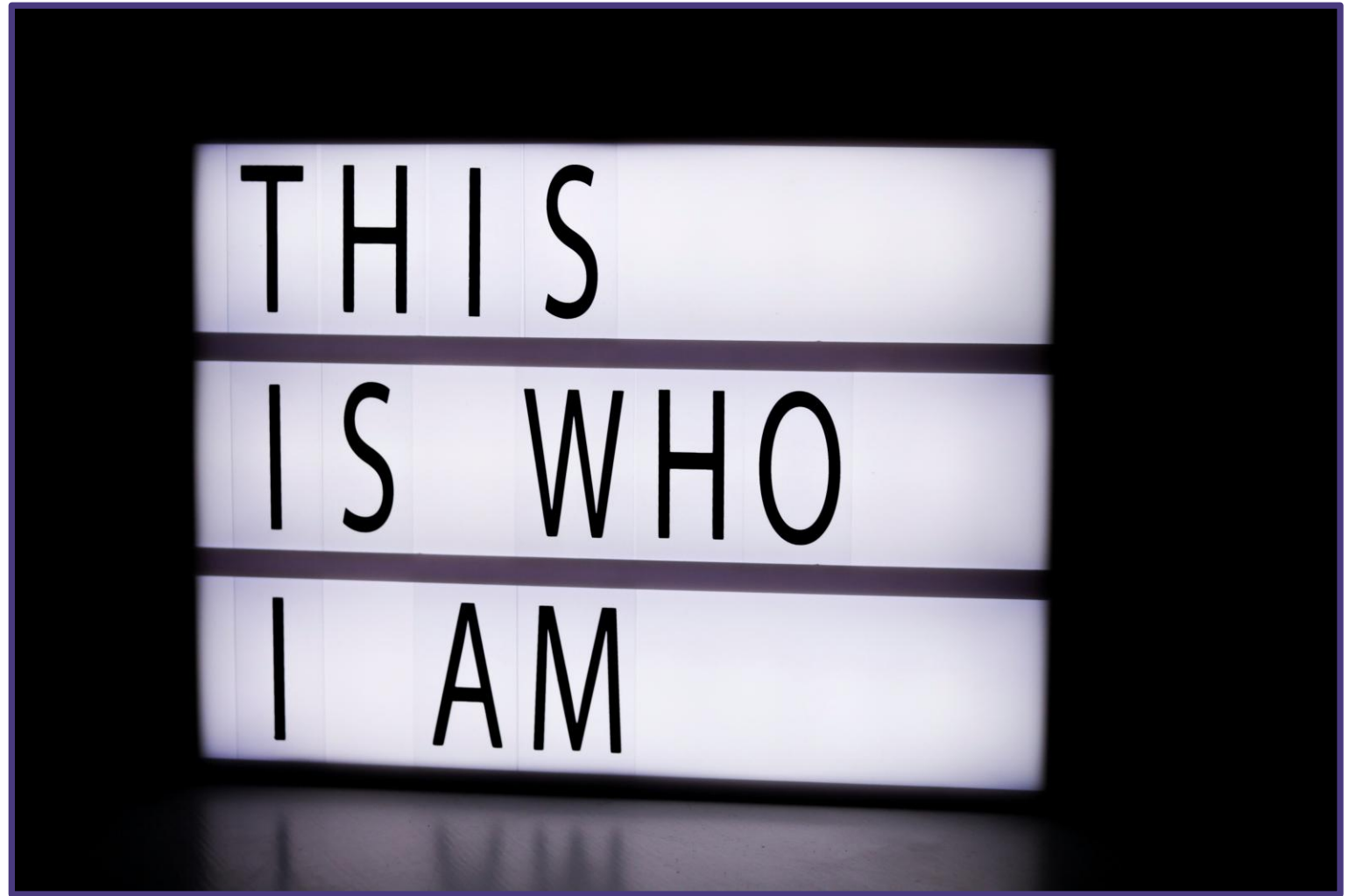
- The tools and methodologies (e.g., cards, constellations, reflection formats)
- Future-oriented discussions with young people
- Strategic reflections on the future of youth work
- The experience gave several participants new language and confidence to engage with futures in their local contexts.

Suggestions for future editions

- Making reading the Futures of Youth Work report a prerequisite
- Using realistic, relatable cases to explore trends
- Providing clearer aims, structure, and expectations
- Continuing with this type of experimental and applied workshop



List of
participants



THIS

IS WHO

I AM

First name	Last name	Country of Residence
Participants		
Nelly	Paytyan	Armenia
Dominika	Swinin	Bulgaria
Šimon	Vávra	Czech Republic
Bigad	Abdelwahab	Egypt
Hesham	Ali	Egypt
Hilma	Ruokolainen	Finland
Antti	Rantaniva	Finland
Tsitso	Robakidze	Georgia
Natali	Petala-Weber	Germany
Sandra	Karlsdóttir	Iceland
Berna	Xhemajli	Kosovo
Andres	Koorndijk	Netherlands
Michał	Pietrzok	Norway
Rosana	Santos	Poland
José	Dias	Portugal
Marta	Costa	Portugal
Tamara	Tomasevic	Portugal
Mirela	Rajkovic	Serbia
Martina	Mrakovčić	Montenegro
Sabina	Belc	Slovenia
Aga	Byrczek	Slovenia
Fergal	Barr	Spain
Team		
Darko	Markovic	Serbia
Gisele	Evrard	Belgium
Domagoj	Moric	Croatia
Sonja	Mitter Škulj	Slovenia
Maya	Petkovsek	Slovenia

ABOUT THE ACADEMY

The European Academy on Youth Work aims to promote the development of **quality youth work** and to support its **capacity to react to current and future developments**. 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 EAYW offers a **platform for exchange and knowledge gathering on trends and developments** in and with relevance to the youth field in Europe, and on **innovative youth work responses** to these trends and developments.

The EAYW is jointly organised by National Agencies for Erasmus+, youth field, and the European Solidarity Corps and SALTO Resource Centres

This resonance workshop was part of the Academy's broader process to deepen future-oriented thinking in the field of youth work.

To access the research, methods and upcoming activities, visit www.eayw.net

