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Consultative Meeting

Revisiting and Updating the Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio



European Youth Centre, Strasbourg
10-11 October 2023

Concept Note

1. Rationale

The sustainability of European identity and the Council of Europe's core values (human rights, rule of law, and democracy) relies on the creativity, competences, social commitment, and contribution of young people, as well as their confidence in the future. Youth work makes an important contribution to active citizenship by providing opportunities to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes for civic engagement and social action.

[The Council of Europe Recommendation CM/Rec\(2017\)4 on Youth Work](#) is the first internationally agreed policy document that explicitly focuses on youth work, its value for society, and the way forward for its quality development in Europe.

The Youth Work recommendation reaffirms the continued support for the initiatives of the Council of Europe's youth sector. Among its roles, it aims to improve coordination and access to youth work knowledge and resources at European, national, regional, and local levels. Additionally, it aims to strengthen the capacity of youth work to respond to changes and trends in our society and the emerging challenges faced by young people. This recommendation, as a youth work policy standard in Europe, promotes the role of young people by enhancing active citizenship, participation, and social inclusion for all young people, especially those who are at risk and marginalised. The implementation of the Youth Work recommendation is currently being reviewed by the Joint Council on Youth.

Amidst rapidly changing socio-economic realities in Europe, the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the lives of young people, and growing digitalization, youth work provision must continuously adapt and respond to the current needs and interests of young people in Europe.

The [Youth Sector Strategy 2030](#) of the Council of Europe defines youth work as of its priorities, with a special emphasis on:

1. Strengthening, recognising, and advancing youth work policies and practices by embedding youth work within youth policy frameworks, notably through a European youth work agenda and its implementation, in cooperation with the European Union.
2. Improving the quality of youth work delivered by volunteer and paid youth workers.
3. Extending the access and attractiveness of youth work and non-formal education/learning for the benefit of a wider population of young people.

The Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio

[The Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio](#) is an online tool that helps individuals, teams and organisations doing youth work around Europe to understand their competence and to develop it more effectively. This tool is also be used by trainers, youth work managers and policy makers and generally all those interested in the topic of quality development and recognition of youth work.

The online Portfolio allows users to participate in a facilitated learning cycle of self-assessment that consists of:

1. analysing and identifying the state and development of youth work competences.

2. gathering evidence on the quality of youth work and ideas on how to improve it.
3. explaining youth work to others in a way that is easy to understand.

Since 2017, over 500 online portfolios were created, and many more organisations reported use of the offline brochure of Portfolio during different educational activities. In 2023, there is a need to review the content and functions of the Portfolio to reflect current socio-economic-political situations affecting young people in Europe and, especially, developments in the field of youth work, such as the establishment of the Bonn Process and the role of the Council of Europe's Recommendation on Youth Work and Youth Strategy 2030.

In 2023 the Council of Europe commissioned a study about updating the Portfolio with the following objectives:

1. To analyse the relevance and up-to-date status of the competence framework of the Portfolio, especially in connection with the Council of Europe Recommendation on Youth Work, with particular attention to its ongoing review process, and other relevant documents and processes such as the Bonn process.
2. To propose specific proposals for updates/revisions of the Portfolio that reflect possible developments of the competence framework and include/address new areas of youth work, notable digital youth work competences.
3. To assess the current modes of use of the Portfolio and propose additional or alternative ways of making use of the Portfolio within the current online version, in e-learning and in-person activities.

The study currently underway employs a mixed methodology, which includes in-depth interviews with key informants, as well as broader consultations with representatives from the youth work community of practice. The process of updating the portfolio, taking into consideration the findings of the study, will be finalised by the end of 2023.

2. About the Consultative Meeting

The consultative meeting on updating the Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio is organised as a direct contribution to the ongoing study. This meeting will provide a platform for discussion and exchange among representatives of the youth work community of practice regarding the preliminary proposals for updating the Portfolio by the research team. Additionally, it will support stakeholders in affiliating themselves with the Portfolio as a tool within the field of youth work, suitable for application in diverse settings, including professional and voluntary youth work, youth worker accreditation programs, national policies, and more. The consultative meeting has the following objectives:

1. To present, discuss, and validate the preliminary findings of the study on updating the Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio.
2. To make proposals regarding the visibility and utilization of the Portfolio within the broader community of youth work practice, as a direct contribution to the ongoing study on updating the Portfolio.
3. To critically reflect on and share insights about how youth work is adapting and responding to the current needs and interests of young people in Europe and to explore

the potential role the Portfolio can play in the future of youth work provision including in the implementation of the Council of Europe CM Recommendation on Youth Work.

4. To share youth work practices, including initiatives at European, national, and local levels, showcasing the Portfolio's applications beyond self-assessment tool, such as recognition in youth work at national level, etc.

3. Participants

The consultative meeting will bring together approximately 20 experts and practitioners who represent a diverse range of stakeholders experienced or interested in using the Portfolio within the youth work community of practice. This includes:

1. Youth organisations and civil society actors implementing youth work programs.
2. Representatives from the statutory bodies of the Youth Department.
3. Trainers, youth workers, and educators actively engaged with the youth sector.
4. Representatives from the youth work community of practice with specific expertise in thematic areas such as digital youth work, trauma-informed youth work, etc.