

STRENGTHENING YOUTH WORK IN CITIES AND REGIONS



**Youth work:
the role of local and
regional authorities**

Report – February 2021

Congress of Local
and Regional Authorities
of the Council of Europe

The Congress



Le Congrès

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In February 2021, **the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities adopted the report “Youth work: the role of local and regional authorities”**. It gives concrete tools to strengthen youth work at the local and regional level. The Congress gathers regions and cities from the 46 Member States, which means you are not alone in strengthening young people’s voices!

What is youth work?

- ▶ Youth work covers a wide range of activities by, with and for young people, in groups or individually
- ▶ Youth work is delivered by paid and volunteer youth workers and is based on informal learning processes focused on young people and voluntary participation
- ▶ Youth work is a social practice, empowering young people and helping them be included and active in their communities and in decision making.

Why is youth work important at the local level?

- ▶ Young people and youth workers are important partners for public authorities and their input can help improve local policies
- ▶ Young people are directly affected by decisions taken at the local and regional level
- ▶ Youth work empowers young people and allows for diverse perspectives, strengthening our democracies from the bottom up
- ▶ By improving young people’s skills, their employment chances and their mental health, youth work helps build stronger and healthier communities.

How can the youth work report help you?

- ▶ By providing young people a tool to work with their local and regional authorities to develop youth-friendly infrastructure and services
- ▶ By offering examples on best practices of youth work at the local and regional level, for example about increasing financial resources for youth clubs and youth initiatives, creating youth councils, evaluating and following up on local youth action plans and many more

LOCAL POLITICIANS AND ADMINISTRATIONS can strengthen youth work by

LISTENING TO YOUTH

Involve young people and youth workers in local and regional policies that impact their lives at large and youth work in particular.

ARE YOUNG PEOPLE HEARD IN YOUR TOWN OR REGION?

- Can they easily get in contact with local government?
- Are there structures in place to consult them, such as a youth council?
- Are young people with different backgrounds and different expectations involved?

Provide youth workers with enough resources, such as funding, equipment, and technical support.

INVESTING IN YOUTH WORK

DOES YOUR TOWN OR REGION INVEST IN YOUTH WORK?

- Is there a long-term plan and budget for youth work?
- Do youth workers receive regular training?
- Is youth work carried out in a sustainable and future-proof way?
- Are there youth centres and other spaces where young people can come together?

MAKING INFORMATION ACCESSIBLE

Present information in a clear and concise way, and give examples, so that every young person can understand and take part in discussions.

DOES YOUR TOWN OR REGION GIVE CLEAR INFORMATION?

- Is it easy to find the website or social media?
- Is there information about youth policies?
- Is it easy to understand what it is about?
- Is there information about available funding opportunities from the European Youth Foundation?

YOUTH WORKERS AND ELECTED OFFICIALS need to work together to

Make youth work inclusive and safe by reaching out to all young people, especially those who might feel isolated or are in a difficult situation and by working towards gender equality



The Council of Europe's Gender Matters manual can help youth workers fight gender-based violence

Cooperate on new local and regional initiatives **to combat climate change** and implement the UN Sustainable Development Goals



The Sustainability Checklist "Greening the youth sector" is a tool to make local youth work more sustainable

Co-create spaces for youth to come together and where local youth workers can carry out activities



Youth centres can apply for the Council of Europe's Quality Label for Youth Centres and receive support with training and resources

Set concrete goals and indicators to measure the impact and quality of local and regional youth work and to understand and address potential gaps



The handbook "Improving youth work – your guide to quality development" explains how to develop indicators for youth work.

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES

RURAL AREAS

- ▶ The Idea Festivals organised by the Rural Youth Project in Scotland bring together rural youth from across Europe to share ideas, network, develop new skills and discuss how to make rural places more viable for young people to build their futures.

MOBILITY

- ▶ In the Municipality of Gentofte, Denmark, young people can get involved in the Mobile Youth Office Project, which drives around in the municipality and involves other young people in activities and policy development. The Project has included events and workshops, as well as a food truck and music.

AWARENESS RAISING

- ▶ In Gran Canaria, Spain, the youth association Nauta has created a radio broadcast initiative, called Onda Europa, to debate and raise awareness of the opportunities of being young and European, by teaching skills on European projects.

ENVIRONMENT

- ▶ In the Governorship of Van, Turkey, the Youth Entrepreneurs Signal S.O.S for Climate Change partnership works with youth to get them involved in creating an agriculture that is environmentally conscious. They work with different organisations on ways to fight climate change through agriculture.

PARTICIPATION

- ▶ In Slovenia, some municipalities organise “mayor for a day” events, when young people can put themselves in the role of mayor. They can present the challenges they face in their municipality and propose ways to solve them, giving local authorities insight in the issues young people face and concrete proposals on how to address them.

INCLUSION

- ▶ In Turin, Italy, Casa Arcobaleno or Rainbow House, is a safe space for all identities to be expressed. It organizes activities in particular with LGBTI youth. For example, they set up a weekly help desk for young people and their families from abroad who need to find their way around the city and make use of the city’s services.

The report *Youth work: the role of local and regional authorities* – adopted by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe in 2021 – highlights the importance of youth work in the 46 member states and the role of local and regional authorities.

The report invites local and regional authorities to design and implement innovative youth policies in consultation with young people. It provides examples of good practice and guidelines for better coordination of youth work between all levels of government.

This leaflet is a presentation of the key recommendations of the report. It was developed in collaboration with youth delegates as part of the Congress' *Rejuvenating Politics* initiative, which aims to promote youth participation in public life and decision-making at local and regional levels. Since 2014, this initiative has enabled youth delegates from the 46 Council of Europe member states to contribute to debates at Congress sessions and Committee meetings.



congress.current-affairs@coe.int
www.coe.int/congress-youth-work

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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 46 member States, including all the members of the European Union. The Congress of Local and Regional Authorities is an institution of the Council of Europe, responsible for strengthening local and regional democracy in its 46 member states. Composed of two chambers – the Chamber of Local Authorities and the Chamber of Regions – and three committees, it brings together 612 elected officials representing more than 130 000 local and regional authorities.

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