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# Study on Updating the Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio



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***The opinions expressed in this work are the responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Council of Europe.***

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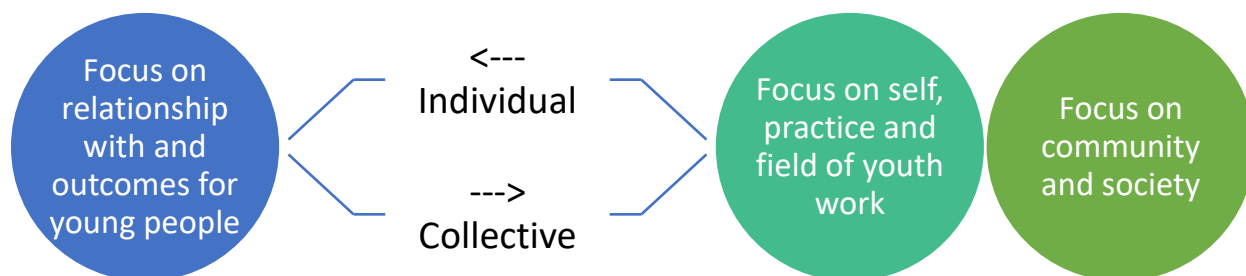
## ***Executive Summary***

The Study on updating the Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio (YW Portfolio) describes identified needs for updating and revising Portfolio. It also provides proposals which the Council of Europe Youth Department (CoE YD) and statutory bodies can take-on and decide upon ways of integrating them in the Portfolio and in the potential complementary processes. The document outlines the proposals for updates and revisions to sustain universality of Portfolio as an European standard for youth work functions and youth worker competences, as well as to support operationalization of Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)4 on youth work and support youth work development in the Council of Europe (CoE) member states. Three areas of intervention are identified: general update of introductory part, youth work essentials and further information sections; revision of competence framework with the self-assessment tool; and ideas about portfolio's uses and better utilisation, based on political developments and largely inspired by the evidence of current practice of utilisation of YW Portfolio.

**In general, needs for updates** are largely due to significant political developments in the youth work field. Furthermore, feedback on current uses of Portfolio provided valuable insights on needs for updates. Apart from general updates to reflect current situation and inform on relevance of political developments with key adopted documents, Study identified need for simpler and more user-friendly language of YW Portfolio. Individual youth works, users of Portfolio as an European tool, have found it as fairly abstract and difficult to engage with without an accompaniment process attached to it. Review should attempt at making portfolio more concrete, practical and usable, with possible inclusion of accompaniment process, pedagogical tools aligned with portfolio, examples and case studies on functions and competences and for the online version – a number of interactive functionalities. Furthermore, number of ways are identified and proposed to improve the functionalities of Portfolio's online version and thus facilitate its greater and more versatile uses. However, looking at feasibility of such revisions is also advised. An overview of proposed updates and revisions of YW Portfolio is outlined in the table [here](#).

**Competence framework**, a core of YW Portfolio, is considered to be value based and a reflection of uniqueness of youth work, as practiced and promoted within the CoE framework of supporting young people, their learning to be democratic and part of European society. Portfolio, thus, needs to be revised to offer clarity to community of youth work practice on how the CoE describes essential youth work functions and competences. Proposal for different way of structuring and presenting functions and competences, is designed so that it communicate and resonate better with youth workers in different contexts across Europe. The reasoning for such revisions is primarily grounded in the need for portfolio to be highly relevant in both educational and practical manner for youth workers and to support member states processes of youth work development in line with the YW Recommendation (2017)4.

Competence framework model with three “focuses” has evolved as result of the work on this Study. The model includes: (I) focus on relationship with and outcomes for young people; (II) focus on self, practice and field of youth work; and (III) focus on community and society. The model reflects the holistic view of youth work, its functions and competences needed. However, for individual youth worker key focus is on relationship with and outcomes for young people, while other two focuses are rather in service of the first one. This also means that focus on self, practice and field of youth work, as well as focus on community and society could be rather pursued in collective settings with teams, organisations and within community of practice, and not necessarily only by individual youth workers, as represented in the graph.



*Graph 1 - Structure of competence framework*

Proposal outlining functions grouped under each of three focuses is outlined [here](#), while the full (draft) list of functions and competences in all three areas is drafted [here](#).

**Use of YW Portfolio**, a tool produced by Council of Europe, carries great potential and inspires different utilization ideas. It has been found by community of practice as extremely relevant for introducing, explaining and understanding the youth work, its functions and competences. However, clearer link to national youth work eco-systems and to youth work related national processes would support and facilitate such uses further. Thus it is proposed that Portfolio's purpose and potential uses are clearly outlined. Proposals for its most meaningful uses include both strategic integration within CoE youth department education and training programs and targeted promotion and use in support to members states' local and national youth work development and implementation of the YW Recommendation (2017)<sup>4</sup> "establishing a coherent and flexible competency-based framework for the education and training of paid and volunteer youth workers". This resource should be promoted in all its potential which goes well beyond a self-assessment tool. Portfolio could be used independently and in combination with other tools and frameworks developed in member states to serve and contribute to quality of youth work and YW promotion, competence development and professionalization of youth work services and youth work recognition.

More details on proposals in relation to those purposes and additional elements that Portfolio could feature can be found [here](#).

Further reading will provide more detailed account on the Study findings on the needs for update and revision of the YW Portfolio, accompanied by examples from the practice. Following pages feature proposals for revisions outlined by author in consultation with experts to whom author is extremely grateful for constructive and open reflections.

## *The background*

Council of Europe's Youth Department initiated reviewing 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. Youth work recognition processes brought developments such as the Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)4 on youth work and findings from its review (2023); thematic priority on youth work in the Youth sector strategy 2030; 3<sup>rd</sup> European Youth Work Convention (2020) and establishment of the European youth work agenda. As an initial step in the process of reviewing and updating the Portfolio, the Study has been commissioned with following objectives:

- (a) 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;
- (b) 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;
- (c) 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 process of conducting a Study consisted of several phases, including:

- **Desk review** of relevant documents.<sup>1</sup>
- **Exploratory online meetings, semi-structured interviews** with sixteen key informants with youth work competence frameworks and self-assessment tools expertise and/or with experience of use of YW Portfolio. Contributing with their expertise and experience were youth workers, youth work managers, trainers/educators of youth workers, policy makers, researchers and youth work experts on digitalisation.<sup>2</sup>
- **Consultative meeting** with 23 stakeholders held on 10-11 October 2023 in European Youth Center in Strasbourg. Two day meeting provided a platform for discussion and exchange among representatives of the youth work community of practice regarding the preliminary proposals for updating the Portfolio.<sup>3</sup>
- **Drafting and finalizing the Study** outlining key findings, recommendations and proposals for updates, based on the insights from the described phases.

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<sup>1</sup> Comprehensive list in the [annex](#)

<sup>2</sup> Detailed account of consulted experts is in the [annex](#)

<sup>3</sup> Meeting agenda and list of experts participating at the consultative meeting is in the [annex](#)

## ***Needs for update and revision of the Portfolio***

*This section was driven by the questions about what needs to be updated and revised for Portfolio to keep being relevant across Europe to youth workers and wider youth work community of practice, today and in future?*

**Update** in the introductory and theoretical parts of Portfolio needs to reflect the political developments. In particular, following documents are proposed to be reflected and integrated.

[Recommendation CM/Rec\(2017\)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on youth work](#) that brought forward YW as an aim on its own and in particular in reference to:

*“2. establishing a coherent and flexible competency-based framework for the education and training of paid and volunteer youth workers that takes into account existing practice, new trends and arenas, as well as the diversity of youth work. Stakeholders, including youth workers and young people, should be involved in developing this framework;”*

[Reykjavik Declaration “United around our values”](#) from 4th Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe 16-17 May 2023 which is outlining what “United in our vision for the Council of Europe” means by specifying:

*“We set the Council of Europe on a new path of increased transparency and cooperation with its stakeholders, with strengthened visibility and sufficient resources. This should include a youth perspective in the Organisation’s intergovernmental and other deliberations as youth participation in decision-making processes improves the effectiveness of public policies and strengthens democratic institutions through open dialogue.”*

European youth work agenda based on [Final Declaration of the 3rd European Youth Work Convention “Signposts for the future”](#) that sets eight priority areas for youth work community of practice in Europe. Updated Portfolio particularly connects to key aspects of:

*“Beyond the youth work community of practice” - ... to communicate the value of youth work and engage effectively with different sectors...*

*“Promotion and recognition” - ...to make youth work better understood, visible and credible as a distinct work arena... and ... to adjust and connect to local contexts and realities, will help create a common narrative...*

*“Innovation and emerging challenges” - ...evidence-informed innovation principles, encompassing long-term thinking, reflexivity and strategy-based youth work... and ... the capacity of youth work to navigate European and worldwide transformations;*

Development of [ETS Competence Model for Youth Workers to Work Internationally](#) that has defined nine competence areas, including newest one of “Being civically engaged” and referring to the magical dimension - youth work relationship:

*“In the interaction between young people and youth workers, there are these ‘magical moments’ that end up having a decisive effect on the lives of young people.”*

Development of [European Guidelines for Digital Youth Work](#) that define approach to digital media and technology as yet another context in which youth work is practiced, with “*focus on digitalisation and digital transformation of the youth work sector and youth work practice*”, including through development of critical digital literacy and agility.

## ***Functionalities of Portfolio's online version***

Firstly, portfolio's **online version** should really be “on” without disruptions and with working links to updated resources. Periodical times of tool's online unavailability were discouraging its use and promotion.

**PROPOSAL:** For portfolio to be even more relevant and useful to community of practice its online version should be more “portfolio like”, as an “upgraded LinkedIn” and where following features are to be incorporated. However, feasibility study on development of such online functionalities could be a first step.

- Designed **functionality of personalised profile** for registered user with possibility to access tailored opportunities and resources in areas of learning development plan and to track progress against set objectives in the learning development plan. (e.g. charts presenting progress visibly and software giving hints for opportunities and resources for pursuing goals)
- Designed **functionality of creating own development plan** and step-by-step to-do list based on **tailored featured offer of available Council of Europe and CoE-EU Youth Partnership resources**. Gently push towards next steps after self-assessment would be provided by referral to relevant publications, courses and other opportunities that would advance competences.
- Added exploratory function with **Q&A section that would result in tailored recommendations** of which competences should be more developed, to further support youth workers that can't fully benefit from self-assessment.
- Enabled option for communication between users of online tool for the purpose of **peer-learning and networking**. Portfolio could serve as platform for sharing practices, resources on and evidences of competences, showcasing the use of competence in practice and thus inspiring other users. In this way youth workers using Portfolio would contribute to the advancement of quality standards in youth work.
- Added feature in the online tool to allow for optional **validation of self-assessment and 360° assessment** by easy sharing option within the tool with peers and externally with trainers, mentors, youth work managers, supervisors and young people, as found relevant. Pending on permission by portfolio users, their organisations, as well as organisers of training and education including CoE Youth Department, could access data on needs for competence development and plan addressing those needs accordingly.
- Designed **functionality of translating Portfolio** to user language.



- Enabled **embedding of multi-media resources** and going beyond merely text based portfolio, including video-tutorials for use of portfolio. (e.g. A video to explain how to work with self-assessment and Portfolio framework, how to use self-assessment tool, how to document).
- Designed **functionality of adding specific functions** of youth work and relevant competences in line with specific youth work form, specific needs of young people and specific context. Pending on permission by portfolio users, Council of Europe Youth Department could analyse shared data to determine potential trends emerging from contextualisation.
- Designed **functionality of integrating self-certification system** (e.g. badges, extracting PDF) that could be used externally too.
- Transforming portfolio into **a mobile phone app** with interactive features and gamification of competence acquirement.

## ***Youth work competence framework***

Competence framework for youth workers as outlined in the Portfolio is found extremely relevant. Eight functions provide structure that's first point of engagement for a user. Study finds that YW Portfolio is understood and used by community of practice as an offer of a 'standard' and that competence framework represent core of what youth work is. However, consulted experts also agree that there is a need to review and re-structure existing functions. Most frequently mentioned need for update in terms of youth workers competences are related to:

- **digital agility** – understanding effects of digitalisation on society, willingness to engage with the mind-set of learning and developing through trial and error in this “new context” and ability to help young people being digitally agile in relation to digital youth participation, online safety, media literacy, AI use, as well as ethical aspects of working online in relation to data protection, access to the internet, inclusiveness of digital tools, influence of digital tools on mental health and wellbeing of young people;
- **engagement skills** – understanding uniqueness of youth work processes and characteristics of youth work relationships, awareness of power (dis)balance within youth work relation, ability to collaborate and co-design with young people, ability to engage with young people ‘where they are in their lives’;
- **systemic approach** – understanding of system influencing young people and youth work, addressing local and global (dis)connect, ability to contextualise;
- **connection to youth work field** – awareness of own role in youth work recognition, promoting and advocating for youth work;
- **working in partnership** – understanding own role, limitations and boundaries, and bringing in relevant experts; working to connect with other sectors, bringing them value and tapping into their potential;
- **values, safety and ethics** in youth work.

**PROPOSAL ON GENERAL UPDATES OF COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK:** Functions and competences are to be reviewed and updated:

- to highlight greater need for youth workers understanding the changes, working with change, tolerating ambiguity and adapting to and navigating changing circumstances;
- to reflect key developments in understanding different concepts and evolution of youth work practice in relation to them. Primarily, concepts such are: anti-oppressive and anti-discriminatory youth work practices in relation to race, religion, disability, sexuality; youth work practice nourishing mental health and well-being of young people while immersing in self-care and modelling gentle placement of boundaries and personal space to young people; youth work practice immersed in values (e.g. environmentally responsible).
- in relation to the overwhelming presence of digitalization and the need for youth work approaches to take it into account, explore and engage with digital media and technology as “a tool, an activity or a content in youth work”, while anchoring it in youth work principles and specific contextual reality (e.g. in relation to digital youth participation and digital citizenship, and in relation to safety considerations and risks of online interactions and data protection). Furthermore, to integrate three specific dimensions<sup>4</sup>: Learning for digitalisation: co-determining the digital transformation in society; Learning about digitalisation: social, cultural, economic impact of digitalisation in society; Learning through digitalisation: digital learning, digital tools and services.

**Structurally**, values and attitudes could be brought up at the level of functions rather than same ones being outlined in relation to each specific competence in rather repetitive manner. Furthermore, for easier use and understanding of youth work functions, it is recommended to make clear distinction between current functions 1-4 looking at outcomes for young people and 5-8 looking at own youth work practice. Experts and users of Portfolio indicated where it needed additional adaptations in local and national contexts.

Example: In the context of war in Ukraine, youth workers are looking for more guidance on youth work functions and specific competences needed in such context with young people and themselves experiencing trauma.

Example: Youth workers engaging with young people in youth centres in Bulgaria which are under the direct jurisdiction of local authorities and who thus don't work through projects (current 8<sup>th</sup> function in Portfolio).

Additionally, Study has found functions in relation to community and society largely missing.

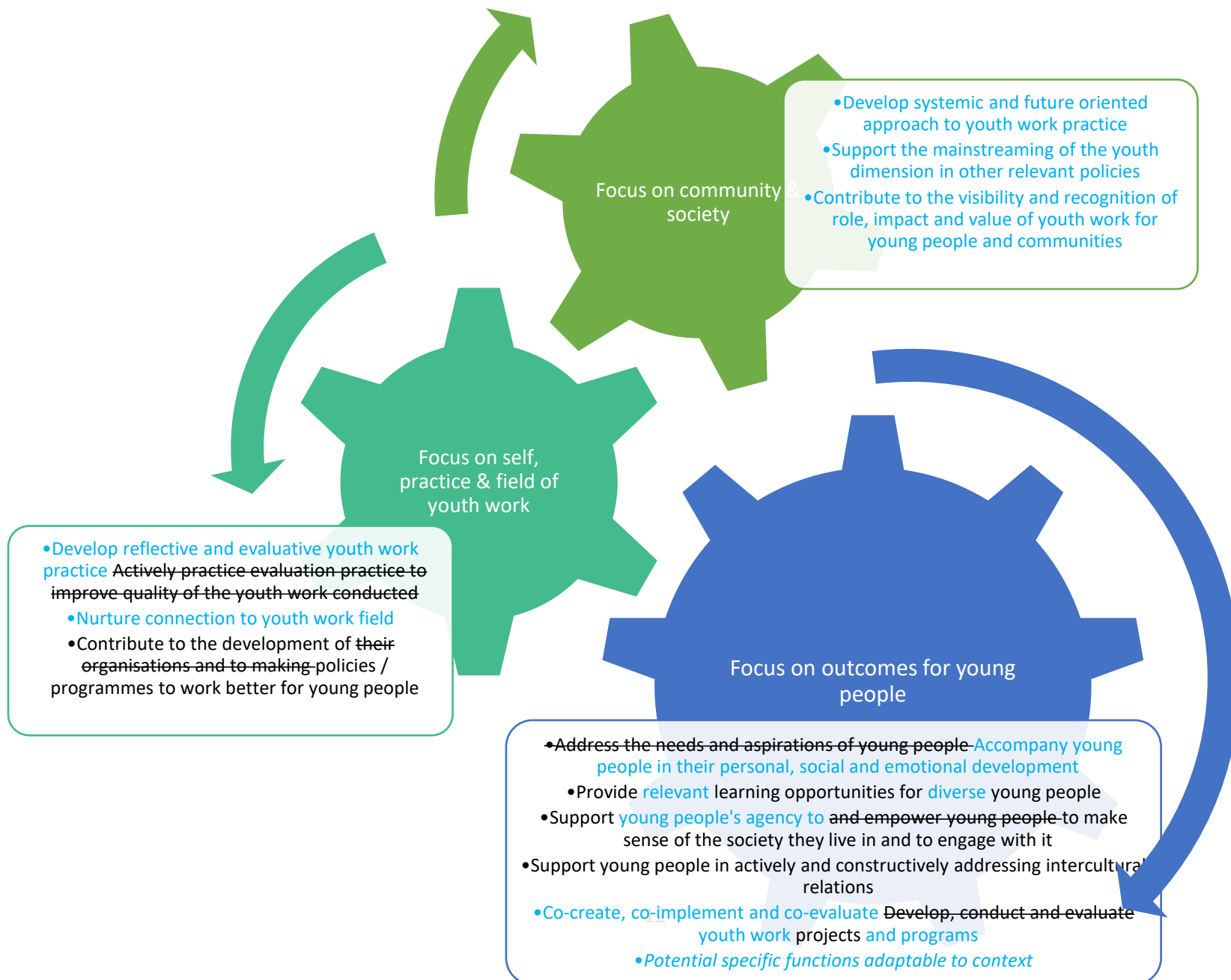
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<sup>4</sup> Competendo Facilitator Handbook “Learning the digital”, Marco Oberosler (CCI, ed.), Elisa Rapetti (DARE, ed.), Nils-Eyk Zimmermann (AdB, ed.), Georg Pirker (AdB), Inês Carvalho (Inducar), Gustavo Briz (Inducar), Valentina Vivona (CCI), 2021/22, [https://competendo.net/en/images/f/f5/Competendo\\_learning\\_the\\_digital.pdf](https://competendo.net/en/images/f/f5/Competendo_learning_the_digital.pdf)

**PROPOSAL ON STRUCTURE WITH THREE FOCUSES:** Functions focusing on relationship with and outcomes for young people are to be distinctly grouped and understood as core of what individual youth worker does. At the same time, functions focusing on own youth work practice and at youth work as a field, and functions grouped under focus on community and society are to be understood as those in service of core functions group. Also, it is crucial to understand those two later groupings as those that are of more collective nature and that demand individual youth worker positioned and supported within community of practice.

Even more, enlisted functions in the group of functions focusing on outcomes for young people should be considered as essential and representing core of what youth work is in accordance to CoE practice and quality standards, and thus applicable in diverse contexts and settings, including digital. Other functions and respective competences would be considered as specialisations and matter of contextualisation and adaptability to specific young people and their needs. Such additional and more specific functions, and thus competences, could be further developed by users in relation to different needs of young people, interests of youth workers and contexts in which youth work is set.

Proposal of grouped and updated functions are outlined in the following graph.



## *Use of Portfolio*

*This section was driven by the question how could Portfolio be used to be more relevant to youth workers and wider youth work community of practice, today and in future?*

The youth work portfolio was developed as a self-assessment tool for individuals engaged in youth work, and not for young people as “beneficiaries” of youth work. It provides a structured competence framework for youth workers to document their achievements, track their progress, identify areas for improvement and set goals for further growth in their practice. However, evidence gathered through interviews and at consultative meeting indicate that portfolio is not systemically used as self-assessment tool. Rather, competence framework was primarily used and found useful for broadening understanding of youth work of different actors of youth work community of practice in education and training settings. Portfolio was, much like Recommendation on youth work, differently used in the developed and emerging youth work systems<sup>5</sup>. It was found extremely useful as a starting point for development of national competence frameworks, occupational standards, youth work strategies, and primarily so, in contexts with emerging youth work eco-systems. From the other side, beyond initial use during training and educational setting, there is little evidence that youth workers are coming back to portfolio. Unhelpful in this regard were often occurring issues with portfolio’s online presence, as well as its general rather literal paper-to-online transformation. Furthermore, there was lack of clarity where Portfolio fits in the youth work related tools and frameworks within the established youth work systems at national level. Thus, in this chapter proposals for portfolio’s purpose, functionalities and featured elements are further discussed.

## *Purpose*

Having in mind that youth work is mainly practiced locally and that it’s governed nationally (if it is governed at all), there is an open question of how Portfolio as an European tool fits within the national youth work eco-system? Furthermore, Portfolio is not completely clearly positioned within European youth work frameworks and tools. Community of youth work practice would benefit from greater clarity and synergetic activities between portfolio and other similar and relevant tools at European level. In the established youth work eco-system, portfolio falls among numerous tools and frameworks that youth workers already have difficulty navigating. However, in context with emerging youth work systems it was used as inspiration and starting point for competence framework developments. Key questions thus are: **What’s portfolio’s purpose? Who are primary (intended) users of portfolio? and Which value does using portfolio bring?**

Namely, **portfolio seems to be found most useful for introducing what your work is** - its functions and youth worker competences needed to fulfil those functions in practice. Portfolio is introduced to youth workers mainly in international training settings with focus on **understanding youth work functions and competence framework** and offering opportunity for **self-assessment tool testing**. Portfolio was however used also for education and training of youth workers at national level.

Example: Portfolio is integrated in vocational education program for youth workers in North Macedonia.

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<sup>5</sup> Interim Report on the Review of the Council of Europe Recommendation on Youth Work (CM/Rec(2017)4), 22 February 2023, Authors: Miguel Angel Garcia Lopez, Frederike Hofmann-van de Poll

Example: There is specific training module on portfolio in training for youth workers in Ukraine.

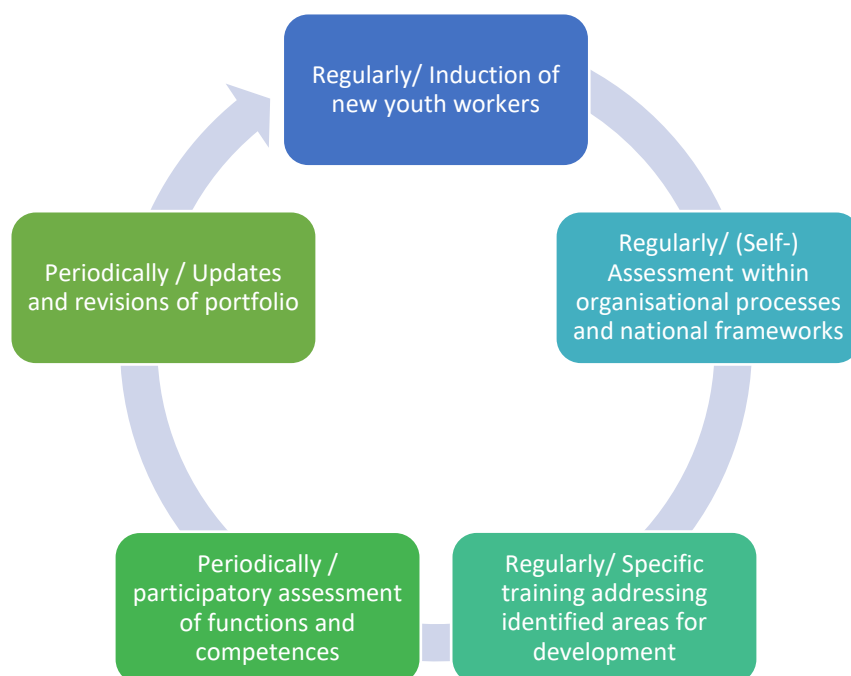
Structured follow-up on introductions of portfolio during education and training seems not to be designed nor implemented at neither national nor international events. Thus, when portfolio is expected to be used by individual youth worker and is not integrated in their youth work practice and eco-system, motivation to continue using it and its perceived usefulness, are likely to decline. Particularly in the cases of youth workers that: do not have possibility to allocate proper time and tap into adequate support; lack clarity on how to actually use portfolio, or other self-assessment tools, regularly; struggle to determine which tool is “primary” one and from which to start looking at competences, occupational standards, quality of practice.

The youth work portfolio was used as a comprehensive tool that goes **beyond self-assessment**. Portfolio served as inspiration, as starting point and base in contexts with emerging youth work systems. There, it was revised and adapted to context and specific needs, re-emerging as new fit-for-purpose policy, framework, mechanism and tool.

Examples: Portfolio has been used for developing national certification system in Lithuania, competence model and occupational standards in North Macedonia and for development of youth work strategy in Serbia. It inspired organisation in Georgia to create own competence framework adapted to context and use it to advocate for government recognition.

However, in those instances portfolio wasn't further used beyond that initial step. New frameworks and tools have been developed at national level, and then there was simply no place there for portfolio in its current form.

Youth work portfolio has great potential and that it could be **better connected to national frameworks** and thus better utilized. Following graph depicts how it was and could be used regularly and periodically within local and national, as well as organisational youth work eco-systems.



Graph 2 - Potential for use of Portfolio within Local/National YW eco-system

Firstly it's important to determine purpose(s) of portfolio and to communicate them clearly. In this respect, there is a consensus among consulted experts that Portfolio should serve to youth work community of practice including youth workers (voluntary and employed), as well as youth work managers, policy and decision makers, youth work educators and trainers and others in different and multiple roles in connection to youth work. Portfolio was used as an educational tool, as a managerial tool, as a general tool for mainstreaming youth work and its competence framework has been used as a standard and aspirational horizon. Thus, Portfolio should be updated and revised both as a 'tool' and as a 'standard'. Portfolio is seen as a resource that could be successfully utilised by youth work organisations for on-boarding and assessment, and by actors engaging in shaping youth work policies at different levels from local to European. Furthermore, Portfolio is placed to directly support member states' operationalization and implementation the YW Recommendation (2017)<sup>4</sup> and particularly to *"establishing a coherent and flexible competency-based framework for the education and training of paid and volunteer youth workers"*. It can be used independently and in combination with other tools and frameworks developed in member states to serve and contribute to quality of youth work and YW promotion, competence development and professionalization of youth work services and youth work recognition.

Proposals are outlined for Portfolio (and/or its elements) to be promoted and used as a 'tool' and as a 'standard', as depicted in the following graph.

## Portfolio as a 'tool'



- ☐ Self- assessment tool for individual development of youth workers,
- ☐ On-boarding and assessment tool to support youth work organisations in workforce development,
- ☐ Educational tool to support initial education and training of youth workers, and
- ☐ Data-gathering tool to better understand the sector and to support its development.

## Portfolio as a 'standard'



- ☐ Well integrated and promoted within CoE activities and youth work policies and practices
- ☐ Bases for development of international and national youth work occupational standards and qualification frameworks
- ☐ Bases for youth work policy developments and recognition

Graph 4 - Uses of YW Portfolio

Several possible pathways into fulfilling YW Portfolio's purpose are identified:

**(I) Quality of youth work and promotion:** Portfolio sets good bases for understanding the youth work and role of youth workers. Portfolio has already been successfully presented as “*youth worker's friend*” in the courses on youth work essentials. However, it is recommended that it is further used within the Council of Europe Youth Department (CoE YD).

**PROPOSAL:** Portfolio should be mainstreamed and used in the activities of the Council of Europe, and it should be built-in the activities of European Youth Centres and feed into the work of the statutory bodies. In particular, CoE YD should develop comprehensive plan of mainstreaming and promotion of Portfolio that may feature following already identified proposals:

- Integrate Portfolio within the policy review mechanisms.
- Use the Competence framework as basis for language and structure of requirements within public competitions for funding and recruitment.
- Embed Portfolio within supported youth projects and educational activities.
- Strategically identify and recruit potential multipliers of Portfolio (e.g. Quality Label Youth Centres, European Youth Work Association (currently in the process of being established) and build their capacities to use and promote it.



- Create opportunities to build capacities of potential Portfolio users, including periodical webinars on specific focuses and functions, as well as induction courses on the use of Portfolio.
- Create tool box with resources to support local use of Portfolio.
- Commission Study on possible value and use of data generated by Portfolio users that would inform creation of educational opportunities.
- Organise testing program with the various uses of Portfolio to gather relevant feedback.
- Trial specifically youth feedback and youth participation as part of youth workers self-assessment.
- Offer spaces for exchanges on YW competence framework in different contexts and youth work sub-contexts.
- Discuss Portfolio within pool of trainers.
- Support development and implementation of:
  - Training and education programs for youth workers based on Competence framework, including in cooperation with universities.
  - Occupational standards for youth work.
  - Quality standards for youth work.
  - Coaching for youth work career development schemes.
  - Youth work projects.

**(II) Competence development and professionalization of youth work services:** As is now, portfolio is largely used by individual youth workers within an accompaniment process, either in training or in mentoring setting.

Example: Portfolio was used for on-boarding youth workers in ENTER! course on Access to Social Rights for Young People.

Example: Portfolio has been translated and introduced in youth work in Ukraine through a training module for youth workers. In an effort to bring it closer to youth workers and their context, trainers developed case studies on competences.

Trainers revealed that introducing Portfolio and competence framework is somewhat complex task. Namely, youth workers need proper exploration of youth work values, to be able to explore functions and competences. Furthermore, they need to have an understanding of value of self-assessment, particularly when it's not common element of culture and when it's not required within their eco-system. Most

difficult aspect for portfolio users in training setting was identifying evidence and justifying self-assessment of competence acquirement. And trainers are doubtful if portfolio was used after those initial instances during training.

**PROPOSAL:** Youth work portfolio should be particularly promoted as a tool to support transition from youth leader to youth worker and should be *“first tool that youth worker receives”*. Accompaniment process is found to be essential for (beginner) youth workers proper understanding and engagement with the tool. However, to generate greater individual use, portfolio could be developed in two “stage” version.

First “exploratory” stage – shorter, easier to use, offering preliminary assessment focused on practical aspects across all functions and competences. This stage could be developed as questionnaire which upon completion generates results based on a scale system. In this way, different users from youth work community of practice would be able to engage with portfolio and with greater confidence – for example uncertainties and issues of over-confident and self-critical initial assessments would be balanced. A good example is the test for level of professional digital competence in youth work developed by Verke<sup>6</sup>.

Second “extensive” stage – detailed, in-depth guidelines in relation to any function and relevant competences that are prioritised by specific user. This stage would largely resemble portfolio in its current form with additional guidelines on self-assessment and evidence documentation, as well as opportunities for development of specific competences.

**(III) YW Recognition:** Youth work portfolio as a self-assessment tool was intended at contributing to youth workers self-recognition, and also to ease the ways youth work is communicated to ‘outside’ and thus to contribute to social recognition. However, it was also used as a good bases for developments within the areas of political and formal recognition of youth work.

**PROPOSAL:** Portfolio should be promoted as a document offering baseline helpful for common understanding of YW functions, principles and values, as well as standard YW competences. As such, portfolio could be used as a starting point for designing policy. Portfolio should be offered to local and national authorities, as a ‘tool’ and as a ‘standard’. It would facilitate opening space for integration of self-development and competence development as regular part of youth work practice. Youth work organisations could use portfolio for on-boarding youth workers and organisational appraisal system. As additional idea, it could be further developed into an assessment tool for youth work policies and organisations.

**PROPOSAL:** In light of evidenced usefulness and inspiration found in comprehensive competence framework that is integral part of Portfolio, it is recommended that Council of Europe Youth Department look into its greater and targeted promotion towards YW recognition processes. Non-exhaustive list of proposals include:

- European Steering Committee for Youth (CDEJ) members could bring Portfolio to their respective institutions, in an effort to have the tool discussed and potentially embedded

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<sup>6</sup> Test of professional digital competence in youth work, <https://verke1.typeform.com/to/AZrU2xJF>

within their youth work system and thus allow Portfolio users to connect to education and employment opportunities at local and national level.

- Explore opportunities for Portfolio to contribute to non-formal education recognition processes in member states (e.g. by building alliances with universities that have started with micro-credentials development; looking into opportunities of portfolio self-assessment counting towards university enrolment and/or qualification attainment).
- Explore alignment with existing competency and qualification frameworks and build consensus on European youth work competence framework.
- Explore and plan for quality assurance mechanisms for youth work qualifications, including by deliberation with educators, trainers, mentors to raise awareness of youth work portfolio and discuss competences for youth workers education and training (e.g. Youth trainers Guild, European Youth Work Association (currently in the process of being established)).

### ***Featured elements***

Current elements in the publication on the Youth Work Portfolio combine knowledge and information with a practical part – self-assessment tool (from the content: Youth work essentials; Youth work competence; Making your own Portfolio; Feedback; Ideas for using the Portfolio; Further Information; References and Glossary). Furthermore, guidance is provided for the use of the self-assessment tool.

**PROPOSAL:** The publication on YW Portfolio should integrate guidance for users for YW policy and standard development, assessments and YW education. Such guidance could showcase examples and good practices in those areas.

## Overview of proposals for updates

Proposed updates and revisions are to contribute to greater universality of Portfolio, operationalization of Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)4 on youth work and supporting youth work development in CoE member states. In principle, review of the Portfolio should strive to use simpler and user friendly language. Overview of current YW Portfolio's sections that should be updated is given in the table.

Section	Proposal for updates
<b>Introduction to the Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio</b>	<p>Update description of Portfolio and its purpose</p> <p>Update the outline of what the publication on Youth Work Portfolio includes</p> <p>Update the info on intended users and uses of Portfolio</p> <p>Update info on contact with CoE YD as regards use and experience with Portfolio</p>
<b>Youth work essentials</b>  (including: <i>What is youth work?; Youth work characteristics; Youth work is diverse around Europe; Youth work and non-formal education; Youth work and youth policies</i> )	<p>Part: What is youth work?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Update defining youth work with the newest descriptions from the <a href="#">Youth Work Essentials</a></li> <li>- Add thinking box with reflection questions on digital transformations in connection to the graphic representation of "What is youth work for?"</li> <li>- Update youth work examples to include digital youth work.</li> </ul> <p>Part: Youth work characteristics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Update characteristics by adding 'Inclusive' and 'Adaptable'</li> </ul> <p>Part: Youth work is diverse around Europe</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Update the text based on the <a href="#">Youth Work Essentials</a></li> <li>- Add reflection Qs to thinking box to include reflections based on the structure and content of revised competence framework</li> </ul>
<b>Youth work competence</b>  (including: <i>Youth work competence; The Portfolio</i> )	<p>Part: Youth work competence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Update the description in accordance to proposal to describe attitudes and values at the level of functions</li> </ul>

<p><i>competence framework; What do the competences mean?)</i></p>	<p>Part: The Portfolio competence framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Update the description to reflect three proposed focuses, functions and competences</li> <li>- Update the description to reflect importance of contextualisation of Portfolio and possibility of adding specific functions where appropriate</li> </ul> <p>Part: What do the competences mean (<i>change the title</i>)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Update the competence framework structured around three focuses, functions with attitudes and values attached to them and competences for each function with specific knowledge and skills (more details <a href="#">here</a>)</li> <li>- Update and integrate evolved concepts and terminology in relation to specific competences</li> </ul>
<p><b>Making your own Portfolio</b></p> <p><i>(including: How to fill in the self-assessment form; List of functions and competences; Self-assessment question sheet; How to fill in the learning and development plan; LDP question sheet)</i></p>	<p>Update the text with list of European sources with youth work resources and opportunities that users can access after filling the self-assessment part</p> <p>Update the text to describe the proposal of organisational use of Portfolio for assessment and on-boarding</p> <p>Part: How to fill in the self-assessment form</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Update in accordance to proposal on two-stage version of Portfolio self-assessment part</li> <li>- Update the text to link learning development plan with available resources at European level and ideas for sources at national level</li> <li>- Update the text on documentary evidence to provide more ideas for users on “what is evidence”, including examples</li> </ul> <p>Part: List of functions and competences (move to previous section)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Update the list to reflect new structure and to include new functions and competences</li> </ul> <p>Part: Self-assessment question sheet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Simplify the sheet (e.g. relevance to be decided at the level of function)</li> </ul>

	<p>Part: How to fill in the learning and development plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Update the text with description of proposed functionalities linking learning plan to relevant resources and opportunities, and “LDP reminder” functionality</li> </ul>
<p><b>Feedback</b></p> <p>(including: <i>Using feedback as a tool for your self-assessment; Getting input from the young people you work with; Feedback from colleagues or external people; How do I choose a “Feedbacker”?; More information on giving and receiving feedback; What feedback is and what it is not?; )Tips for giving and receiving feedback</i>)</p>	<p>Update the term “feedbacker”</p> <p>Re-publish the section as a video guide</p>
<p><b>Ideas for using the Portfolio</b></p> <p>(including: <i>Ideas for individual youth workers / youth leaders; Ideas for teams of youth workers / youth leaders; Ideas for organisations; Ideas for youth work managers; Ideas for trainers of youth workers; Ideas for policy makers; Translations of the Portfolio</i>)</p>	<p>Move this section at the beginning of publication</p> <p>Update the text to include on-boarding and transition from youth leader to youth worker; assessment process in organisations; accompaniment process in educational settings; operationalization of YW Recommendation (2017)<sup>4</sup> in member states and use for development of youth work standards, qualifications and policies.</p> <p>Part: Translations of the Portfolio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Update in accordance to proposal for functionalities of the online tool</li> </ul>
<p><b>Further Information</b></p> <p>(including: <i>Who developed the Portfolio?; What is the European debate on recognition of youth work about?; How does the Portfolio fit into European recognition debate?; What are the options for recognition available to Portfolio users?</i>)</p>	<p>Update the text on political developments within CoE to include YW Recommendation (2017)<sup>4</sup> and Youth Sector Strategy 2030</p> <p>Update text to refer to other relevant developments including 3<sup>rd</sup> European Youth Work Convention (2020) and establishment of the European youth work agenda; ETS competence model for Youth Workers to Work internationally; European Guidelines for Digital Youth Work.</p> <p>Part: What is the European debate on recognition of youth work about?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Update the text to reflect current debate</li> </ul>

<b>References</b>  (including: <i>Useful reference websites</i> )	Update and check links
<b>Glossary</b>	Update and check links
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	Update

## ***Draft list of functions and competences in three focus areas***

### FOCUS ON RELATIONSHIP WITH AND OUTCOMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

#### **1. Accompany young people in their personal, social and emotional development**

##### *Attitudes and values*

- 1.1 Address the needs and aspirations of young people
- 1.2 Understand the social context of young people's lives and support young people to navigate them
- 1.3 Build positive, non-judgemental, trusting relationships with young people
- 1.4 Demonstrate openness in discussing young people's personal and emotional issues
- 1.5 Relate to young people as equals

#### **2. Provide relevant learning opportunities for diverse young people**

##### *Attitudes and values*

- 2.1 Support young people in identifying their learning needs, wishes and styles, taking any special needs into consideration
- 2.2 Create safe, motivating and inclusive learning environments for individuals and groups
- 2.3 Support young people to reflect on own learning
- 2.4 Inform young people about learning opportunities and support them to use them effectively

#### **3. Support young people's agency to make sense of the society they live in and to engage with it**

##### *Attitudes and values*

- 3.1 Assist young people to identify and take responsibility for the role they want to have in their community and society
- 3.2 Support young people to identify goals, develop strategies and organise individual and collective action for social change
- 3.3 Support young people to develop their critical thinking and understanding about society and power, how social and political systems work, and how they can have an influence on them
- 3.4 Support the competence and confidence development of young people

#### **4. Support young people in actively and constructively addressing intercultural relations, anti-discrimination and anti-oppression / to be further developed**

##### *Attitudes and values*

- 4.1 Support young people in acquiring intercultural competences
- 4.2 Promote interaction between young people who come from diverse backgrounds at home and abroad so that they can learn about other countries, cultural contexts, political beliefs, religions, etc.
- 4.3 Work creatively on and with conflicts with a view to transforming them constructively
- 4.4 Actively include young people from a diverse range of backgrounds and identifications in youth work activities
- 4.5 Support young people in understanding and applying concepts of non-discrimination and anti-oppression



**5. Co-create, co-implement and co-evaluate youth work projects and programs**

*Attitudes and values*

- 5.1 Involve young people to develop projects
- 5.2 Involve young people to implement projects
- 5.3 Involve young people in communication and visibility of youth work projects
- 5.4 Involve young people in planning and organising evaluation
- 5.5 Actively involve young people in shaping policies and programmes

**6. Self-tailored part with potential specific and contextual YW functions focusing on particular outcomes for young people**

FOCUS ON SELF, PRACTICE AND FIELD OF YOUTH WORK

**7. Develop reflective and evaluative youth work practice**

*Attitudes and values*

- 7.1 Plan and apply a range of participatory methods of reflection and evaluation
- 7.2 Use the results of evaluation for the improvement of youth work practice
- 7.3 Stay up-to-date on the latest youth research on the situation and needs of the young people
- 7.4 Actively evaluate teamwork with colleagues and use the results to improve effectiveness

**8. Nurture connection to youth work field**

*Attitudes and values*

- 8.1 Involve in collective learning and working with colleagues
- 8.2 Share relevant information and practices within youth work community of practice
- 8.3 Engage with relevant youth work (recognition) related processes

**9. Contribute to the development of policies and programmes to work better for young people**

*Attitudes and values*

- 9.1 Co-operate with others to shape youth policies
- 9.2 Advocate for participatory youth policies shaping
- 9.3 Seek links between youth work practice and policies

FOCUS ON COMMUNITY AND SOCIETY

**10. Develop systemic and future oriented approach to youth work practice / to be developed**

*Attitudes and values*

- 10.1 Understand different eco-systems for young people
- 10.2 Deliberately observe signs of changes
- 10.3 Design adequate responses to emerging challenges and opportunities
- 10.4 Plan for contingency and design youth work activities with high potential for adaptability
- 10.5 Innovate own youth work practice

**11. Support the mainstreaming of the youth dimension in other relevant sectors / to be developed**

*Attitudes and values*

11.1 Cooperate and work in partnerships and strategically cross-sectorally

11.2 Advocate for youth mainstreaming in other sectors' policies, practices, services

**12. Contribute to the visibility and recognition of role, impact and value of youth work for young people and communities / to be developed**

*Attitudes and values*

12.1 Mindfully gather evidence of impact of youth work

## ***Annex1: List of consulted documents***

Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on youth work, with particular attention to its ongoing review process <https://rm.coe.int/1680717e78>

YOUTH WORK IN THE SPOTLIGHT, Guide to Recommendation CM/Rec(2017)4 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to member States on youth work <https://rm.coe.int/09000016809e1c3a>

Youth sector strategy 2030  
[https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result\\_details.aspx?ObjectId=0900001680998935](https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=0900001680998935)

The European Youth Work Agenda and the Bonn process <https://www.bonn-process.net/>

Youth Work Portfolio Evaluative Study (2019)

ETS Competence Model for Youth Workers to Work Internationally [https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-4385/ETS\\_Competence\\_Model\\_Youth\\_Workers\\_final\\_2023.pdf](https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-4385/ETS_Competence_Model_Youth_Workers_final_2023.pdf)

European guidelines for digital youth work <https://www.digitalyouthwork.eu/guidelines/>

Visible value - Recognition of youth work, CoE-EU Youth Partnership <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/visible-value-recognition-of-youth-work>

Developing digital youth work, Policy recommendations, training needs and good practice examples for youth workers and decision-makers, Expert group set up under the European Union Work Plan for Youth for 2016-2018 <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/fbc18822-07cb-11e8-b8f5-01aa75ed71a1>

Competendo Facilitator Handbook “Learning the digital”, Marco Oberosler (CCI, ed.), Elisa Rapetti (DARE, ed.), Nils-Eyk Zimmermann (AdB, ed.), Georg Pirker (AdB), Inês Carvalho (Inducar), Gustavo Briz (Inducar), Valentina Vivona (CCI), 2021/22, [https://competendo.net/en/images/f/f5/Competendo\\_learning\\_the\\_digital.pdf](https://competendo.net/en/images/f/f5/Competendo_learning_the_digital.pdf)

Report on the Bonn Process Meet-up 2023 [https://www.bonn-process.net/downloads/publications/51/2efd1987deaac4648bec7a6fb47c5845/2023\\_Bonn%20Process%20Meet-up\\_Report.pdf](https://www.bonn-process.net/downloads/publications/51/2efd1987deaac4648bec7a6fb47c5845/2023_Bonn%20Process%20Meet-up_Report.pdf)

Insights into developing the youth work environment, A thinking and action kit, CoE-EU Youth Partnership, 2022 <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/105305579/014722+Insights+YW+environment+EN.pdf/d255be35-91e8-188f-6c2d-d98aa394c6ff?t=1667833567000>

Digital Citizenship Education Handbook, Being online, Well-being online, Rights online, Council of Europe, January 2019, ISBN 978-92-871-8734-5 <https://rm.coe.int/16809382f9>

Youth work curriculum framework <https://www.nya.org.uk/quality/curriculum/> and national occupational standards in UK <https://cldstandardscouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/CombinedYouthWorkNOS.pdf>

Youth Work Portfolio in North Macedonia (Portfolio na mladinski rabotnici) <https://smr.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Portoflio-na-mladinski-rabotnici.pdf>

A professional digital competence toolbox for youth work, <https://www.verke.org/en/publications/a-professional-digital-competence-toolbox-for-youth-work/>

Digital Youth Work - a long term project of the National Agencies of Erasmus+ Youth and the European Solidarity Corps, <https://www.oph.fi/en/education-development-and-internationalisation/long-term-cooperation-projects/digital-youth-work>

A Framework for Promoting Positive Mental Health and Wellbeing in the European Youth Sector, Dr Tuuli Kuosmanen, Dr Katherine Dowling & Professor Margaret Barry, October 2020, [https://positivementalhealth.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/O1\\_full\\_web-1-1.pdf](https://positivementalhealth.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/O1_full_web-1-1.pdf)

Youth Work: A Manifesto For Our Times, Bernard Davies, summer 2005, <https://indefenceofyouthwork.files.wordpress.com/2009/03/youth-work-a-manifesto-for-our-times-bernard-davies.pdf>

Digital YOUTH WORK, digital resource hub <https://digitalyouthwork.scot/>

Digital will continue to grow – as youth workers can we use it for good? <https://digitalyouthwork.scot/digital-will-continue-to-grow-as-youth-workers-can-we-use-it-for-good/>

Youth work (education) in flux: contemporary challenges in an erratic Europe Report on the EU youth conference, Helsinki, 1-3 July 2019 by: Tomi Kiilakoski & Marko Kovacic, [https://www.minedu.sk/data/files/9092\\_report-on-the-eu-youth-conference-helsinki-1-3-july-2019-003.pdf](https://www.minedu.sk/data/files/9092_report-on-the-eu-youth-conference-helsinki-1-3-july-2019-003.pdf)

## ***Annex2: Consulted experts via interview***

Alyona GLAZKOVA

Frederika HOFMANN-VAN DE POLL

Gubaz KOBERIDZE

Juha KIVINIEMI

Kevin JONES

Liz GREEN

Miguel ANGEL GARCIA LOPEZ

Mihai VILCEA

Miriam TEUMA

Nadia TISMANARU

Nedeljka BOROJEVIC

Nerijus KRIAUCIUNAS

Silvia VOLPI

Slava MEZHDOYAN

Vesela MAREVA

Yaryna BORENKO

## ***Annex3: Consultative meeting agenda and Experts participating at consultative meeting in Strasbourg***

### **Monday, 9 October**

*Arrivals of participants*

### **Tuesday, 10 October 2023**

9:30 Opening of the meeting.

Sharing expectations for the consultative meeting

Introduction to the work of the Youth Department and of the Council of Europe in the field of youth work, the scope and function of the consultative meeting

with Rui GOMES, *Head of Division for Education and Training, Youth*

*Department*

Youth Work Portfolio and the European Youth Work Agenda

with Laszlo Milutinovits, *Senior Project Officer, EU-CoE Youth Partnership* (tbc)

11:00 Break

11:30 Presentation of the preliminary findings of the study on updating the Portfolio.

with Ajsa Hadzibegovic, *consultant/researcher*

13:00 Lunch

14:30 Preliminary findings of the study on updating the Portfolio.

*Discussion and proposals on the key functions and competencies*

16:00 Break

16:30 Preliminary finding of the study on updating the Portfolio.

*Discussion and proposals on the application and utilization of the Portfolio*

18:00 Conclusions and closure of the day

18:30 Reception at the European Youth Centre Strasbourg

*Self-Organised Dinner*

### **Wednesday, 11 October 2023**

9:30 Sharing practices of applying the Portfolio as a tool

with Stanyslav Mezdoyan, *Umbrella, Georgia* (tbc)

Yarina Borenko, *Association of Youth Workers, Ukraine* (tbc)

Monica Corrigan, *Aequalitas* (tbc)

11:00 Break

11:30 Plenary discussion on the key ideas proposed by the working groups with regards to updating the Portfolio

13:00 Lunch

14:30 Consolidating the proposals for the study on the Portfolio and future steps for the Council of Europe.

16:00 Break

16:30 Youth Work as a priority in the Council of Europe Youth Sector Strategy, Review of the CM Recommendation on Youth Work, and next steps.

With Nedeljka Ivosevic, *Advisory Council on Youth, Council of Europe*

18:00 Conclusions and closure of the meeting

*Self-organised dinner*

## **Thursday, 12 October 2023**

*Departure of participants*

### **PARTICIPANTS**

ALESSANDRA COPPOLA	PHD Candidate, University of Salerno, Italy
ELIZABETH GREEN	YouthLink Scotland, United Kingdom
GUBAZ KOBERIDZE	Youth Workers' Association of Georgia, Georgia
JAN DEDUYTSCHÉ	Department of Culture, Youth and Media of the Flemish regional government, Belgium
KEVIN JONES	National Youth Agency, United Kingdom
MAREVA VESELA	International youth centre - Stara Zagora, Bulgaria
MIHAI VILCEA	National Youth Foundation (FNT), Romania
MONICA CORRIGAN	Aequalitas, Portugal
OLGA KYRIAKIDOU	Hellenic Youth Workers Association, Greece

OKSANA TRESCENKO	The Employment Service under the Ministry of Social Security and Labor, Lithuania
SALEH BAGHIROV	Heritage - Youth Education and Promotion Center, Azerbaijan
SIMON SCHEMBRI	Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ, Malta
STANISLAV MEZHDOYAN	Umbrella, Georgia
Yael OHANA FORBRIG	Frankly Speaking, Germany
YARYNA BORENKO	Association of Youth Centers of Ukraine, Ukraine
ZARUHI LAVCHYAN	KASA Swiss Humanitarian Foundation, Armenia

#### COUNCIL OF EUROPE

##### Advisory Council on Youth

NEDELJKA IVOSEVIC	National association of youth workers (NAPOR), Serbia
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RUI GOMES	Head of Division for Education and Training, Youth Department
SULKHAN CHARGEISHVILI	Educational Advisor, Educational and Training Division, Youth Department
KATALIN ORMOS	Administrative Assistant, Educational and Training Division, Youth Department
AMBRE MULLER	Programme Assistant, Educational and Training Division, Youth Department
CONSULTANT(S)	
AJSA HADZIBEGOVIĆ	Consultant/Researcher

#### EU-COUNCIL OF EUROPE YOUTH PARTNERSHIP

LÁSZLÓ MILUTINOVITS	Senior Project Officer – European Youth Work Agenda
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