



Erasmus+



Reinforcing links

Experiences of cooperation between the formal and non formal sector in training youth workers

salto|youth

Editorial information

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A special thank you goes to the writers of the 10 examples in the publication. They spent quite some voluntary work time to inform readers about good examples of cross sector cooperation to train youth workers.

All project examples are available online at SALTOs Good Practice database: www.salto-youth.net/goodpractices

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Introduction

Young people are an integral part of an increasingly complex society. They are shaped by a variety of different influences and environments - home, school, work place, peers and the media. In this context youth work - which complements formal education settings - can play an important role in young people's development. It is a broad term covering a large scope of activities of a social, cultural, educational or political nature both by, with and for young people. Youth work plays different roles in society and can contribute to youth related policy areas, such as lifelong learning, social inclusion and employment.

Obviously, youth workers working in youth work and youth social / care work organisations, providing such support to youth, need to be multi-talented to cover all aspects of support needed and partly expressed by youth. Not always is it obvious though what youth workers should be competent in!

To be trained as youth worker means to oversee quite a jungle of training offers organised by higher and secondary education, vocational training centres and a large diverse market of training providers in the field of non-formal education. The set of offers differs from country to country very much. For example in some countries it is possible to achieve B.A or M.A in youth work and in others one cannot study youth work at all or would need to specialize within the studies on social work.

This brochure is a result of a small practice mapping exercise, which was carried out in the framework of European Training Strategy of the Youth in Action Programme (2007-2013). This compilation of experiences is not about mapping or assessing training offers available for youth workers but serves to motivate

the training providers in different educational sectors to cooperate in order to better equip youth workers with the competences needed to work with and for youth. With these ten examples of cooperation, we hope to inspire new projects undertaken between different sectors, in their environments and realities.

Experiencing learning mobility is an important part of a portfolio of offers for youth. For youth workers, apart from a source for learning as such, experiencing learning mobility themselves is almost a pre-condition to be able to motivate and support youth in undertaking learning mobility projects abroad.

The Erasmus+ Youth in Action Programme (2014-2020) creates conditions and offers funds for youth workers' mobility in order to increase their competences and to learn from good practices abroad. The programme supports Strategic Partnerships that support the development of cooperation in the youth field as such, with a particular focus to cross educational sector cooperation. With this being said, the following examples might also inspire the use of Strategic Partnerships of Erasmus+ Youth in Action to generate European cross educational sector training offers for youth workers.

The renewed European Training Strategy will support the aims and objectives of Erasmus+ Youth in Action. The cross educational sector cooperation in general and the Strategic Partnerships in particular are called to be one of the focuses of that strategy. Erasmus+ Youth in Action will increase the cross sector cooperation and will provide space for innovation and sharing the experiences.

On behalf of the Steering Group of the European Training Strategy



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Estonia: Involving all the actors in the development of youth workers

The following example aims to bring forward some of the steps taken by different stakeholders in Estonia in order to enforce a systematic approach towards youth worker's training through strong cooperation between the formal and non-formal learning and training sectors.

In Estonia, we have taken a strategic approach to youth workers' competence development through a complex set of different measures over a longer period of time. Both the following have been considered important - guaranteeing the availability of youth work curricula in formal education as well as offering extensive non-formal training opportunities at national and international levels.

Currently there are three higher education institutions that hold youth work studies curricula in Estonia: Pedagogical College of Tallinn University, Narva College of University of Tartu, Viljandi Cultural Academy of University of Tartu. **As well there are** numerous actors that are providing non-formal trainings on various levels. In recent years, one of the strategic aims at the national level has been to **establish greater synergies between** these two sectors

through involving representatives of both fields in common training events. One measure that has been taken is the involvement of key actors from the youth field practice in programme committees of youth work curricula in the three colleges. Other measures include the following:

As part of the national occupational qualifications system, the **qualification standard for youth workers** was first adopted in 2006 and renewed in 2011. The qualification standard describes the main competence requirements for youth workers in 3 levels. The process to develop the professional standard as well as the committee responsible for assessment of applications for occupational qualification (awarded twice a year) involves an extensive range of actors from state institutions responsible for youth work on the national level (e.g. the Estonian Youth

Work Centre and the National Agency for the YIA programme; umbrella organizations such as the National Youth Council, the Association of Youth Workers, the Association of Open Youth Centres, the Association of Estonian Cities and the Association of Municipalities. Included as well are the higher education institutions such as Tallinn University, Tartu University and respective colleges). Having adopted a professional standard on the national level is a step towards supporting the professionalism of the field and setting certain directions for training of youth workers. First of all, it presents a well-elaborated common ground for expectations towards professional competence of youth work(ers).

Evidence-based approaches to training. The study “Competencies and the Development of Competencies in the Field of Youth Work” implemented both in 2005 and again in 2010,

provides an in-depth perspective into what is the educational and training background of youth workers (in positions and levels as varied as existing in practice). As well, it provides insight into how they evaluate the impact of training on their competence development, what are the specific expectations related to trainings from the viewpoint of practitioners and their employers, etc. The 2010 study was commissioned by the Estonian National Agency for the Youth in Action Programme (YiA is responsible for offering non-formal learning opportunities for youth workers in Estonia) and has been carried out in cooperation with the Institute of Sociology and Social Policy at the University of Tartu. The results have been elaborated by all three institutions that hold youth work curricula as well as by other key organisations in the youth field, and in events such as the trainers’ community, etc.

ESF Programme “Developing Youth Work Quality”.

From 2008-2013 a complex national programme is being implemented in Estonia, co-funded by the European Social Fund and the national government. While the programme represents a very diverse set of measures aimed at supporting the employability of young people through high quality youth work, there are some strands that are specifically targeted at competence development of youth workers and involve networking and cooperation of training providers in the formal and non-formal field. Essential elements of this include:

- Development of educational publications in the youth field. The initiative to create a Textbook of Youth Work as an extensive cooperation process among key organisations from youth work practice together with academic staff who are involved in concept-developing, writing of chapters, test-reading, etc. Started in 2010, it goes without saying that the preparation process of such material, aimed to set some fundamental basis for future youth work trainings, has not been an easy process. The Estonian and Russian versions of the textbook are planned to be published in 2013.
- Training programmes for youth workers have been implemented in close cooperation with training providers both from academic and non-formal education sectors. Among these programmes are: Training of Basic Skills and Knowledge in Youth Work (where the National Agency has launched the Call for Tender and as result of it, the Pedagogical College of Tallinn University has been appointed to develop and carry out respective training programmes) and the Summer Academy School of Youth Workers implemented by the Viljandi Cultural Academy at the University of Tartu in cooperation with National Agency. Also in open calls for trainers' teams, the involvement of trainers with experience from the non-formal training field together with academic staff from youth work programmes in universities continues to be encouraged.
- Training of trainers sub-programme has been established to support the development of a trainers' community and their competences in youth field in Estonia. As well it supports the networking and internationalisation of trainers, academic staff, and those responsible for the youth work curriculum development in formal and non-formal education in the youth field.
- The activities over the years have included reaching out to trainers in the youth field (as diverse and wide as that exists), discovering the competences essential for good quality youth field trainings, and developing the Competence Model for Youth Field Trainers. This has only been possible through the active involvement of key institutions and the trainers' community itself (the process was launched in 2009 and completed in 2011, and the Competence Model is now available both in Estonian and English). Based on the Competence Model, the practical handbook KOMA (only in Estonian) was developed for trainers, supporting them with tools for self-assessment and planning for professional development.

Also, over the years different training events have been organised for trainers at the national level. Included among these is a long-term programme on mentoring as a way to support the competences of trainers and the national 'Tool Fair' for trainers, which has been running since 2010. As well, there have been a multitude of calls launched to support the participation of trainers from Estonia in international training events. Open nominations for the Youth Field Trainer of a Year have also been launched in order to bring more transparency and recognition to trainers as important stakeholders for the quality of youth work. This recognition has now been observed for 3 years with increasing popularity when considering the number of nominees presented each year by participants from various training courses, youth field institutions, etc. All these steps have paved the way for greater understanding and links between all the various training providers.

Since 2009, each year a study visit has been organised by the National Agency for academic staff of youth work curriculum and the main youth work training providers at the national level (including the Ministry of Education and the Research Youth Department, the Estonian Youth Work Centre and the Estonian National Agency). These study visits are aimed at getting acquainted with practices in youth

(field) studies/education and training practices abroad, introducing respective practices from Estonia as well as establishing links for future cooperation. The study visits have been organised to take place in Wales Newport University, Malta University, Leopold-Franzens-University of Innsbruck in Austria and Istanbul Bilgi University Youth Studies Unit. It is now evident that these study visits have resulted in stronger coherence and co-ordinated cooperation at the national level between the stakeholders from both formal and non-formal education in the youth field. It has also yielded international cooperation between the involved higher education institutions in the format of seminars, summer academies, exchanges of students and academic staff, etc. that have been organised as a result of these study visits. None of this would have been possible without the financial support from YiA, LLP, the British Council and other programmes. It is important to note that in Estonia, the fact that the formal studies of youth work are of a rather "practical" nature, has probably been one of the supporting aspects, while at the same time, the need to enforce the research and development in youth work curricula is also one of the strategic objectives.

All these developments have affirmed the clear need to involve different stakeholders and training providers into further discussions on developing training policy for the youth field. Such initiative was launched by the Estonian National Agency in autumn 2012. The process is based on an analysis, carried out by an independent consultation and research company Cumulus Consulting, and involves all the key stakeholders from the national training field to contribute to the survey through focus groups and also to elaborate and interpret the findings of the survey. This exercise will

fertilise the future developments of youth workers' training in Estonia in an even more coherent way. It is also expected to feed into the development of the national strategic development plan for the youth field (youth policy and youth work) for the period of 2014-2020. It will undoubtedly point out some specific needs and perspectives regarding the training of youth workers to enforce its role in supporting the competence development of youth workers and trainers in the field as they respond to the needs of youth and society at large.

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France: Incorporating the European and international dimensions

It started in 2005. I had been trying for several years to enter into one university for social work in my region. My main idea was to bring non formal education methods and approaches and intercultural education into the youth/social work curriculum at my university in Rennes, France. The idea went much further than expected!

In order to show the relevance of including intercultural education in the curriculum of future social workers, I decided to use the European dimension as a key element to catch their interest and open a door. It succeeded and, after 8 years, the cooperation between the university and non formal education structures became part of the daily life of our university.

2005: Creating a small module on intercultural education using non formal methods

I succeeded in entering the social work programme at a university in France, receiving a degree as a socio-cultural animator. While there, I had a few sessions on intercultural learning using non formal education methods, which was quiet innovative. 2005 was to convince, and in 2006 they had the conviction to continue.

I was given the chancellor's approval and the opportunity to give it a go. Though many teachers were curious, still many were unconvinced, particularly in regards to the "noise" that my lessons were producing. I was one of the only trainers from the non formal education field enrolled in this university.

2006: Initiating European cooperation

I talked about this idea to bridge formal and non formal education structures to 3 colleagues from different countries (Anita Silva from Portugal, Marta Medlinska from Poland and Pieter Jan Uyttersproot from Belgium – Flanders), and they were all interested in trying to bridge non formal education with the youth/ social work programmes in their universities.

This is what happened:

- 1) We created a 1 week training course for students in youth/social work in higher education from 4 different countries. It was during their holidays, and the only contribution from each university / high school was to bring a teacher as observer. The first event was quite challenging. With a very low budget, we hosted a training course on a small pedagogical farm provided from friend of ours. The space included only 1 big room which functioned as both the working space and the dining room. . Such conditions, these first few days, reinforced the prejudices of some university teachers about non formal education (not very serious, playing games, no good learning environment...). But by the end of the week, the 4 university teachers understood the efficiency of the learning process of their students and became the best ambassadors of non formal education.
- 2) A few months later, we organised a meeting with the teachers of each university / high school and a person involved in the decision-making body of the university to speak about the experience and define future perspectives.

Those 2 steps were very positive and after the meeting, the different universities and high schools of social work decided to begin a cooperation by:

- Developing an intensive programme under the Erasmus programme for the next couple of years (which would include 2 weeks mobility of students and also teachers and trainers) about non formal and intercultural education in youth / social work.
- Starting the reflection process to integrate the relevant topics in their curriculum for future youth/social workers.

From 2007 to 2011: Development of the European Cooperation

- International trainings for students in youth/social work became a yearly event and a part of the life of the universities. Progressively, it became part of the Erasmus programme: Intensive programme. The first challenge was to create a pedagogical process of 2 weeks for 50 students. The second and even greater challenge was to design and deliver the programme through pairs of university teachers and trainers in the non formal education field, to learn from each other, and also to show the relevance of non formal education methods in the learning process. Of course, it was not always easy to fight against mutual prejudices between formal and non formal education actors; but step by step, we had a core group of teachers and trainers who were very cooperative.
- In the universities / high schools of Portugal, Belgium FL and France, they integrated in the curriculum for future youth workers / socio-cultural animators a module on intercultural education using non formal education methods. The Portuguese further integrated a module specifically on non formal education.

Today: European cooperation reached its goal to create bridges between formal and non formal education in the curriculum of youth / social work

- 3 universities continue to have the new modules in the curriculum.
- The Intensive Programme was officially discontinued in 2012. As we didn't want to force the partnership, a decision was taken to discontinue the IP. The original goal was to continue with the IP process even once the programme officially ended. The purpose of the European cooperation was to create those bridges. As I previously stated, these bridges were realised through the new modules in the universities, and also through the continued work that both the Portuguese trainer and myself are committed. Both of us are dedicated to social/youth work at the university in our regions.

The impacts of this process in social work at the university in Rennes, France

It is easier for me to speak about all the impacts this process had in the French university:

- I started to have more space and modules in the university: an intercultural education module during the two year degree / a module on intercultural learning for students studying a period abroad.
- I started to support some university teachers wanting to create non formal education methods in their lessons (mainly a teacher of social economy and another in social psychology).
- I've been invited to create with university teachers a space in the curriculum for pedagogical innovation called "Learning in Another Way". The main idea is to support students to create a 1 week learning process for other students. The main purpose is to make students become more of an "actor" in their learning process, and to help them to design learning processes for others, using non formal education methods. This curriculum has existed now for 3 years; and although it changes every year, more and more teachers are involved in it.
- More trainers in the non formal education field have started to have modules at the university (on human rights education, the coaching process of young people, non formal education...). Our process is not, of course, the only factor responsible for this, but it certainly has contributed to its realisation.
- The module on intercultural education is now designed and implemented together by a university teacher in social psychology and myself.

- And the last and hugely significant result has been that for one and a half years, a core group composed of university teachers and 3 NGO's in the youth field started to work on designing a new university degree in Non formal Education and Social Change in which each module and contents would be co-designed and co-led by a university teacher and trainer / practitioner in the non formal education field.
- We were planning to start it beginning in 2014, but the agreement commission rejected the degree as it was, mainly because of chock of practices— too much space for non formal education actors and methods. But we will not give up. We still want to do it, but it may take a bit more time.
- However, this new degree is already starting to make some waves. For example, the self-evaluation is an important element in the evaluation process of this new university degree. And this was one of the issues under argumentation for those who voted against this new degree in the commission due to its strong connection in the power relation among teacher / student. But the commission's decisions also brought about some interesting developments and outcomes; a new group was created in May 2013 to reflect on the role of self-evaluation in the university. We will apply again to the agreement commission of the university next autumn. Let's keep our fingers crossed.

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Germany: European policy into the curriculum

Social Work students from the University of Applied Sciences Koblenz between 2008 and 2010 did know what European youth policy was about, its evolution, achievements and challenges. They got to know the main characteristics and actions of the YiA programme. They discovered the structural dialogue, became aware of the possibilities of the open method of coordination and discovered the meaning of European Citizenship within youth work. They even discussed the meaning and implications of all that in their region (Rheinland-Pfalz).

Experienced youth leaders or youth workers in Europe are often very familiar with all these topics, but unfortunately in social work study programmes these topics are underestimated. That is the reason why dealing with these issues has to become an integral part of the social work curriculum and why it was so important and significant.

This was made possible thanks to the cooperation between the University of Applied Sciences Koblenz, Faculty of Social Studies

and the German National Agency of the YiA programme. This cooperation started in an informal way and was formalised later on. It covered the hiring of trainers and the running of block seminars for the multiplication of knowledge.

In terms of methods, the seminars were a combination of active learning methods (such as open discussions or participants developing YiA projects according to their interests) and lecture-type inputs.

This cooperation took place on a small scale (for a limited time), but it was successful and it can inform and inspire future initiatives in the same direction. This experience showed us that:

- Beyond the concrete programmes and actions there is a real interest by social work students on European youth policy.
- The inclusion of youth policy and other related topics in the curricula is perfectly possible if there is a real willingness to have it. Its exploration in a local or regional context can be a perfect way for becoming aware of the connections and mutual implications between the local-regional and European levels.
- In terms of methods, the combination of active learning methods and lecture-type inputs is very enriching for dealing with those contents and, in some cases, an inspiration for dealing with other related topics (i.e. participation, civil society...).
- Beyond personal initiatives and visions, after a certain accumulated experience, it is important to formalise the cooperation. At the same time, this formalisation as such is not a guarantee if that cooperation is not renewed with new contents and an ongoing impulse.

It would be nice to hear from other small experiences of cooperation. We are convinced that they can contribute to train, during their studies, more competent youth workers. Additionally, slowly but surely, these kinds of cooperation can build lasting bridges between formal and non formal learning.

Balkans and Middle East: Applied conflict transformation studies

For two years 2006-2008 I have been tutor at the Applied Conflict Transformation Studies ACTS Balkans and Middle East, International Global Peace Education MA Program – Responding to Conflict (UK), Nansen Dialogue Centre (Serbia and Kosovo/a) & Novi Sad University. This is a unique program for the experienced practitioners within the field of conflict transformation aimed to develop their practice and field of conflict transformation at global level. 2 years program consists of educational modules and implementation of an action research with Masters Degree level. This was a global education program with branches in Africa, Asia and Balkans and as tutor I have been responsible for education of practitioners from the Balkans and Middle East. Tasks included design of educational activities: residential modules, assignments and individual tutorials but also design and structuring of the educational concept of the whole studies.

The vision...

s of an innovative programme, which develops and articulates the experience of people working for peace, human rights, democracy and justice, builds new theory from practice and tests it in the fire of reality. The ACTS course has been designed to meet the needs

of practitioners involved in the broad field of “conflict transformation” which can bridge the gap between academic research and the wealth of experience that exists on the ground, providing an alternative to the traditional academic Masters programme.

The partners...

the studies were bringing together within each region three partners involved: International partner; responsible for making the global connections between the regional centres and ensuring the quality and standards; Regional partner brings the local expertise and knowledge both of working in the field

and facilitation and training and Local academic institution: regional partners will be working closely with a university/academic institution to run the ACTS course. This will provide the framework, structure and experience necessary for running a Masters programme.

Participants...

the course is designed for men and women who want to develop the skills and wider competence they need to build greater peace and justice in their own situations and countries. Some have been already working in the general fields of peace, human rights, and development; others were looking for ways to become engaged in these, or related, fields; some participants came from civil society, including local and international NGOs; others were

engaged in the public sector, e.g. education, public health, the security sector, or in the political field. Still majority of the participants were coming from civil sector – social workers, youth workers, trainers, project managers etc. There was no requirement that participants have a first degree. However, the accreditation available for ACTS is likely to vary according to the academic qualifications which participants possess.

Action Research...

the idea was that the use of AR methodology will enable us to build our theory about what works in this field, through a systematic process of learning through action for action. In AR the researchers are consciously and deliberately

involved with the events or processes that are being studied. They are in some way participants and acknowledge the role they play in influencing events, including that role and the way they play it in their field of attention. The

impact of their own choices and behaviour is a key part of what they are researching. By using

AR, the ACTS course enabled participants to investigate areas of their work as a practitioner.

The “potentialities - achievements”

By combining the practical with the academic, the course enabled participants:

- to begin to investigate and find answers to key issues that they are facing within their work.
- to make a step-change towards a more resourceful and resilient professionalism, by supporting engaged individuals and their organisations at all levels and in different sectors of society.
- to make their knowledge and experience explicit, thereby contributing to both local and global discourse on the subject.

This is essential if work for human rights, peace and genuine democracy in threatened societies is to move beyond short-term, often patchy impacts towards major, sustained influence locally and internationally.

One of the outcomes participants were often mentioning as the most relevant one is building and developing systemic thinking in approaching diverse social issues, that is enormously important not only related to conflict transformation field, but to many issued youth work is addressing as well. What significantly contributed in this process was a fact of having participants combined from various sectors but working within same area of interest – that provided complexity of learning experiences in the group and in the team as

well. The of potential of the learning process can be expressed in the dilemma - How does being a practitioner express itself in an academic course, and how does engagement in academic studies express itself in our practice? Besides participants it was a strong learning experience for us as tutors – by having complexity of roles that had to be undertaken as well as involvement with wide range of stakeholders. So it was a course that required thinking and working “beyond the box”.

The challenges...

well, to finish as I started, looking from the perspective of a tutor. There was fundamental need to create an effective, complementary and self-supporting tutor team - being pioneers in doing what we do, from time to time we feel isolated, with not much support or understanding from outside. Therefore it was of outmost importance for ACTS tutors to find their fellow-tutors supporting and encouraging. The issue the team was constantly facing was fine-tuning, with guest lecturers, resource people and academic colleagues, a common understanding of the very aim of a specific

session (or the whole course). The common language and values developed within the tutor team were not necessarily easily understood or accepted by the wider group of people included in the process of teaching and learning. If they wanted to achieve the goals set for the course and for particular sessions, ACTS tutors needed to make sure that the input given by 'outsiders' is in line with the learning objectives and, as far as possible, with the learning process of each student.

The future...

the ACTS is present at the moment only in Asia. ACTS Balkans and Middle East studies were

closed in 2008 because of the lack of funding. And the future? No answer to this.

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Poland: Fostering intercultural competences

“Między Innymi - Among others” is a joint initiative between the Polish National Agency of the Youth in Action Programme and the German-Polish Youth Office for qualifying as International Youth Work multipliers and for developing awareness and competence for intercultural encounters.

Między Innymi: The idea

The world nowadays is filled with diversity, mobility and constant change. Intercultural competence proves vital in various contexts - travelling, migration, exchange programs for younger and older people (studying and volunteering abroad), or working in an intercultural environment.

But how can we define intercultural competence? In our team we understand intercultural competence as a combination of knowledge about intercultural similarities and differences and how it influences people's behaviour and actions. This includes the ability to build positive intercultural relations and the ability to communicate and interact effectively and appropriately. Essential for this is an attitude

of tolerance for ambiguity, cognitive curiosity and a willingness to learn and change one's perspective. All competences mentioned here are becoming indispensable in the world that we live in now.

In Poland we observe a great need to raise awareness and train skills for intercultural and multicultural encounters. To realise this we wanted to start with a group of future teachers, youth workers and cultural animators who will have a great impact on youth in the future. We felt that the best moment to implement this was during their formal studies. In that way, incorporating non-formal learning into a formal academic education system became also a very important aspect of our project.

Między Innymi: The project

Our project started in 2010 as a joint initiative between the Polish National Agency of the Youth in Action Programme (www.mlodziej.org.pl/) and the German-Polish Youth Office (pnwm.org/). The idea for this stemmed from the need which both institutions recognized to start qualifying multipliers for International Youth Work and developing awareness and competence for intercultural encounters from a different angle. That's how Między Innymi – “Among others”, www.miedzyinnymi.org.pl/) was born.

The main focus of Między Innymi is to provide future teachers and youth workers with basic knowledge and skills of Intercultural Education and Non-Formal Education. For this we developed a programme for students of pedagogy - i.e. future teachers

or social workers. This programme consists of five modules (Introduction to Intercultural Education, Intercultural Communication, Stereotypes, Intercultural Project Management and Intercultural Competences), as well as an introduction to non-formal learning and a presentation of the programmes and activities of both organisations.

We cooperate with various educational institutions and universities. Every year we are able to cooperate with 5 to 7 different institutions. To realise our programme we have a group of eight trainers, supported by the Polish National Agency of the Youth in Action Programme and the German-Polish Youth Office. Both institutions also finance the overall costs of this programme.

Między Innymi: Our experience

The first workshops took place in October 2011. Since then we have cooperated with 12 higher education institutions in Poland, including Warsaw University, Łódź University, and the University of Social Sciences and Humanities. Whereas in the first years we focused more on larger cities, we are now spreading our activities over the entire country. To date, we have

worked in Warsaw, Łódź, Poznań, Szczecin, Białą Podlaska and Włocławek.

Since 2011 nearly 300 students have taken part in our workshops. Every workshop is evaluated by participants and the feedback has been very positive. We are reassured, especially in regards to two following aspects:

The importance of Intercultural competence

Participants of our workshops stressed the importance of intercultural competence for themselves and for their future work as a teacher or youth worker.

“I noticed how important it is to make contact with other people and to get to know their culture, and not only rely on what I already know.”

“I learned that there might be different perspectives in interpreting other people's behaviour.”

“Intercultural communication is not only between two cultures, but begins between two people.”

Classes on this topic are seldom offered at universities and for some students it was their first time having classes on such topics. Although Intercultural Education is becoming more and more popular, this has not been reflected in the curriculum of teacher and youth worker education. Knowledge about other cultures as well as the ability to establish intercultural relations and communicate effectively really needs to be present in the Polish education system.

Non-formal Education within Formal Education

Our engagement at the universities clearly revealed that approaches to learning and education applied in Polish higher education institutions do not embrace non-formal learning activities at all. Most of the classes are based on lectures or other ex cathedra methods. Only few classes introduce experiential and non-formal learning activities that actively involve students.

“I opened myself and started to talk and share my experiences during the workshop.”

“I thought about myself and my attitudes; I knew before that every person is different and therefore should be seen differently, but the workshop increased my awareness.”

“I take with me practical exercises that I can use in the future as a teacher.”

Again it seems that offering our workshop met the need for a broader variety of pedagogical approaches and methods, especially when it comes to future teachers and youth workers who are going to work with young people.

Między Innymi: Some ideas and plans for the future

We would definitely like to continue the project and organize workshops at different Polish universities and other institutions of higher education. One of the main conclusions from the last evaluation meeting was that it is worth spreading the idea and our activities in smaller cities and towns of the country. While for the larger universities our workshops may be just one part of many that are available, for smaller academic centres we may provide a very fresh attitude when it comes to both intercultural education and our methodology. It gives us a chance not only to provide knowledge and skills regarding intercultural education but also to promote non-formal education by showing it can function well and effectively within the frame of formal structure.

Another idea for the future is to use the Internet as an educational tool. As e-learning and blended learning become more and more popular and present in Polish educational institutions, we

are considering the possibility of creating an Internet platform. It would serve as a means of communication and exchanging experiences between students, as well as a library where they could find various materials and articles devoted to different aspects of intercultural education. Finally, we would like to organize an online learning module which would be a great addition to traditional workshops.

Our project and its effects provoked a great interest and appreciation for the German staff of the German-Polish Youth Office. They are considering the possibility of organising similar workshops at German universities, which would give the project an international dimension.

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Intercultural Trainer and Coach

Romania: Professionalization of youth workers

'Youth worker' is an occupation that has been included in Romania's National Code of Professions in 2013, when a more coherent process for establishing its profile started to develop. The level of education required for becoming a youth worker is secondary education. The main route of access is non-formal learning (NFL).

The more recent attempts to consolidate the professionalization of youth workers in Romania are largely EU-driven, with a number of 864 youth workers being certified in 2012 following a first training of this kind (via a ESF project). A training and consultancy company assisted the Ministry of Youth in providing the learning and in generating a professional profile of youth work. Participants received certificates that are recognized at the national and European level.

Concerning the formal education route: In the late 90s, following a law requiring primary school teachers to have post-secondary education, pedagogical high schools needed to restructure their offer, mostly in view of maintaining their human resources.

A strategy at the time was to propose an offer of formal training for 'instructors-animators'/ 'instructors for extracurricular activities'. This meant four years of high school conducive to obtaining a baccalaureate and such a certificate. The curricula were largely similar to the curricula for training teachers, with a focus on psychology, pedagogy and practice in schools and kindergartens. The choice for this profile did not respond to a significant labour market need at the time and it was to a certain extent, no more than a strategy for institutional survival. 'Youth worker' was not included in the Romanian National Code of Professions. But neither was 'instructors-animators'/ 'instructors for extracurricular activities'.

In the meantime, the legislation changed and the pedagogical high schools came back to their initial function to train primary school teachers (who needed to pursue tertiary education afterwards). Very few high schools continue training 'instructors-animators', 'instructors for extracurricular activities'. Arguments for this choice are many: (i) the occupation 'instructor-animator'/ 'instructor for extracurricular activities' is not recognized in the National Code of Professions; (ii) the employment prospects seem very reduced; (iii) there is weak demand among young people for this qualification. The decision to continue with training instructors for extracurricular activities rests with high schools.

In 2013, the Romanian National Code of Professions was revised and now it includes 'youth worker', but not 'instructors-animator' and 'instructor for extracurricular activities'. One can hope the formal education offer will change accordingly. Overall, there are now several important windows of opportunity:

- 'Youth worker' is now a formally recognized occupation;
- There is a broader European move toward the professionalization of youth work;
- There is a growing tendency toward extra-curricular activities and after-school programs;
- Romania has a large NGO sector.

However, there are several critical challenges that need to be considered:

- A weak policy interest for introducing the qualification in the formal sector;
- Weak awareness at what youth work entails. Thus, a future high school curriculum needs to genuinely reflect the diversity of activities & competencies required by youth work and not be a duplication of what is offered for prospective teachers;
- An economic climate that makes the occupation less appealing to young people.

Bulgaria: Internships in NGOs

The last few years were very intensive in terms of youth field developments in Bulgaria.

The National Youth Strategy 2010 - 2020 was adopted by the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science. It has been one year since the Youth Worker profession has been made legal. At this time there is still no subject in the formal education system in Bulgaria dealing with the competencies needed for youth workers. Now the existing closest subjects in universities are "Social work" and "Non-formal education".

The "social work" studies serve the needs of all governmental institutions delivering social services and job opportunities.

During the 2008/2009 school year, Non-formal education was introduced as a new subject in the University of Sofia. It was created to support the rapid development of extra-school learning opportunities for youth and adults. This subject prepares experts in education in using non-formal methods and working outside of formal education institutions.

University education in Bulgaria (especially in such new subjects) is still 90% theoretical and knowledge-oriented. The lecturers in this department realize that they will be much more successful if they start to work with experts in the non-formal educational field. So external experts were invited to give some lectures and implement courses on this subject. These external experts were usually people without a formal degree in non-formal education, but with vast experience in its methodologies.

Also, for this university subject there is a final internship (6 months practice during the last semester) with students being outsourced to external organisations. The students are given a list of NGO's, institutions, associations, labour offices, etc. to choose where to make their final internship.

Most of the internships are done in NGOs because those are the most active in the field.

During these internships students are involved in the organisation's different projects and activities. In order to offer an internship and be accredited to work as a "Base institution for the Sofia University" all the NGOs have to pass an assessment by the university.

My organization "NC Future Now 2006" has now worked for two years as a Base institution in this internship programme.

The greatest benefit from this cooperation (between the NGOs and the university) is that students can experience real youth work and non-formal education practices in a real environment. For the last couple of decades in Bulgaria, all youth work has been provided by NGOs on a project by project basis. And this situation is still far from changing. So, in this case, future youth workers can develop experience in real situations and not in "simulation

laboratories". As providers of this experience, in our opinion, the only capable organizations are those that work in the field.

One challenge in this practice that remains is the lack of connection between the background of the lecturers in this department and the real situation related to practice in the "Youth Worker" profession. There is still only academia without practical previous experience in the field of non-formal education. And this is a normal situation in a country without a tradition and recognition of non-formal learning and education.

We are optimistic that in the near future, in close cooperation with the Ministry of Education, universities and NGOs, the situation in Bulgaria will start to become better in regards to the youth field.

It would be nice to hear if other NGOs around Europe have similar experiences. I would be happy to exchange and discuss it.

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NC Future Now - Youthwork and International Cooperation

Hungary: Social responsibility into the training of social workers

Our programme was established to address the urgent need of society to reduce unemployment and especially the unemployment of young people and of those who have just entered the labour market. Youth unemployment has drastically increased over the years and economic specialists say that it can only be reduced through joint venture and on a long term scale. Professionals often don't give the right solution if young people are in doubt and have questions, and specialists don't have methodology with which to respond adequately to new challenges. Problems related to unemployment can be distressing, especially since they can lead to social pressures, discrimination, xenophobia and racism.

We included in the training the Youth Information and Service Office from both Nyíregyháza and the North-Plain Region, as well as the employers and volunteers imparted via these offices.

rights, and evaluating its impact on mental health, human relationships and young people's future prospects. We consider that both the challenges and the problem solving methods are related to national and international mobility.

The main goal of this programme was to observe the questions pertaining to youth unemployment with an insight into human

The team

- Trainer: Imre Töviskes, Trainer, Social Worker BA, HR-Consultant MA
- Co-trainer: Sziklai Attil, Member of Amnesty International, Sociology BA
- Gyakornok: Csaba Török, Social Worker student
- Co-ordinator of the Facult: Laszlo Pattyan, Social Work MA, Deputy of Social Work Education, Associate Professor

Participants and timing

2012-2013, Second semester – for a period of 28 hours

The training was an official part of the formal education as a class for 3 credits.

Originally 29 students applied for the course, and 24 finished it. The outcome was a written work from each student that could either be a non-formal developmental tool or a training plan that they planned to implement with a group of unemployed young people.

- Students attending University of Debrecen Health Care Faculty: Social Work BA
- Community animators/facilitators
- Labour Market Counsellor compulsory training attendees

During the recruitment and selection process, the preferred applicants were those who volunteered for civic or church-related organizations, as well as those who played a role in foundations and associations working in the field of labour market.

For the assessment of applicants, it was crucial to have the participant be involved in such programmes, which are connected to the labour market status of young adults, because it was our most important goal to make training results become multiplicative.

Training goals and methodology

Our goal was to empower the participants to recognize the processes and to understand them. We wanted to give them tools which would help them find mutual solutions during their daily work.

Questions pertaining to youth and youth unemployment called our attention to the challenges and changes generally within youth policy. Research on this topic shows that in nearly every European country the period after education in which young people become active in the job market is a crucial period. In the event of unemployment, young people may consider other options such as volunteering, looking for a job abroad, or finishing a compulsory training.

It is a serious problem when statistics show that the majority of young unemployed people have become desperate and have lost their hope in supporting systems. However what is hardly mentioned in the official statistics is that they are not available for supporting programmes.

We planned to enhance the multiplicative influence of the training by supporting our participants and providing many tools and competencies.

We planned to enhance the training's multiplying effect so that our participants would

encourage the participation of young people in social change and in those fields which are connected to employment and education. This process was meant to develop the educational tools and methodology which would empower young people (by the professionals and other experts) to initiate and to develop activities, so they could give adequate answers to issues that could arise during their workforce experience concerning burdens and discrimination.

During the training we applied tools of non-formal pedagogy and some other training methodology. We promoted tools which were free and accessible to help give new skills to the experts working in specific fields of activities. One tool we promoted was COMPASS – Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People published by the Council of Europe.

We built the study process based on the earlier experiences of the participants and worked on such cases with which we could start a conversation and mutual understanding, well based on the introduction of theoretical knowledge and practice. The underlying principle of the training was to use a self-experience-based study process, as well as to enforce the participants to become capable of re-integrating learning after recognition and understanding.

It was a priority during the programme to handle learning in such a way, which was useful not only for the participants, but for the funders and target groups of the multiplier institutes and organizations. The training adopted a wide-

range of role playing (rpg) and drama pedagogy to help the representation of diverse scenes. Various themes enhanced the learning and allowed for issues to look at from different points of view.

Themes

- Disadvantage and discrimination of young people in the field of workforce
- Key themes connected to youth unemployment
- Aspects and priorities of the employers
- Ongoing economic issues and their connection to prejudice
- Unemployment and mental health
- How unemployment shapes human relations
- Mobility and migration
- Xenophobia and racism, their effect on workforce
- Marginalization, strengthening social pressure
- Responsibility of experts in the antedate of society's separation
- Active participation and empowerment to solve personal problems
- Working methods of cultural elements and stereotypes
- To map the status quo and motivation of workforce actors
- To treat personal way of life and discrimination in a person's life-cycle

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- Training Kit on Social Inclusion, Council of Europe and European Commission, 2003.
- COMPASS – A Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People, Council of Europe, 2002.
- T-kit 7: Under Construction Citizenship, Youth and Europe, Council of Europe and European Commission, 2003.
- Coyote Magazine, issues 11, 14, 15.

Partner organisations

- Nyíregyháza, University of Debrecen Health Care Faculty
- The University of Debrecen Faculty of Health – its centre functioning in Nyíregyháza (Hungary) – is an educational unit of University of Debrecen and the Centre for Medical and Health Science.
- The HUMAN-NET Foundation. The HUMAN-NET Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg County Human Resources Development Foundation has been dealing with the supply of professionals in the region, examining and analysing them. The main focus has been the development of the county's human resources. www.humannet.hu

Our Mission

To support and improve the development of the region's intellectual capital with committed highly qualified young professionals at the European skill level and with diverse language skills, who will be actively involved in the implementation of the development process.

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The Human Net Foundation

FYROM: Partnership for 'Leadership and Community Youth Work'

This story has several levels of interaction between the non-formal education and formal education sector. I will be focussing on my experience in this long process which took place between 2007 and 2009 in Macedonia.

Background to the Story

Forum Syd Balkans Programme was operating in the Western Balkan countries of Bosnia Hercegovina, Macedonia/FYROM, Montenegro and Serbia. Part of its work was to conduct a course for youth workers, 'Leadership and Developmental Community Youth Work'. This had been developed in cooperation with Jonkoping University in Sweden (originally in the mid 1990's with PRONI Institute and then taken over by Forum Syd in 2004). The course was run across the region in various youth projects and centres that had been set up over the years. Although this was a course with a formal education origin, all the methodology of the teaching was non-formal education based.

I joined the organisation in 2003 and taught the course in all 4 countries until 2007. In 2007 Forum Syd Balkans Programme completed

a transition period of localising the various projects to becoming nationally registered NGOs. At the same time, the youth work course from Jonkoping University was being implemented in a university in each country.

In Macedonia/FYROM, the Forum Syd project became NGO Triagolnik – Centre for Non-Formal Education, Skopje – and the youth work course was transferred to South East European University in Tetovo. At the university it was the Faculty of Public Administration and Political Sciences that took on the course. Neither the faculty nor the university had any prior connection to social work or youth work. This was a completely new field for the university and its staff. Much credit for making this happen should go to the Education Manager of Forum Syd and the Director of Triagolnik for their

determination. Credit should also be given to the openness of the Public Administration Dean and staff for taking the risk to take on this course. From 2007 to 2009, I was based in Macedonia/FYROM. I worked for Triagolnik and with the university.

The NGO and the university worked in partnership to offer the 'Leadership and Community Youth Work' course at the university.

The teaching staffs were Teaching Assistants (TAs) from the university and trainers from the NGO. Each module was taught by a pair of teachers: one trainer and one TA. The course was a one year diploma level course of 120 ECTS. The course consisted of 12 modules and a practical placement. The examination process was through essays, attendance and quality of participation (we never actually found a satisfactory way to measure participation).

My Role

My role was to support the implementation of the course into the university and to train the trainers and TAs. I worked with them for 2 years, initially training them in non-formal education/ learning and the subjects of the course and later operating as a mentor/supervisor, supporting

their work and helping them develop where necessary. In 2009 my role was no longer necessary and I had to leave the programme – which was the intention from the beginning in terms of the localisation strategy.

Whose Course Is It? Formal vs. Non-Formal!

The initial combining of a non-formal education organisation and a formal education institution was not a smooth road. The trainers from the NGO had all been students of the course and so had a basic understanding of the methodologies of non-formal education. The TAs had all been involved in teaching at the University for Most, if not all of their careers.

The trainers, because they were former students of the course and understood the concept of non-formal education, assumed the course belonged to them and therefore took ownership of the course. The TAs assumed the course was theirs – after all it was being produced by their university and was taking place on their territory at the university.

As observer and supervisor, I witnessed the latent conflict that took place between TAs and trainers as they struggled for dominance, each trying to show the other side that indeed the course was theirs.

The transition for both groups of people was not easy however; over time; begrudging respect came from each side to the other. Ultimately strong partnerships were formed; so much so that one or two of the pairs were still working together in 2012 running the course in Pristina, Kosovo with a partner university .

Other smaller issues

There were a number of other issues that arose and that are interesting to note in terms of this relationship between the formal and non-formal education worlds. The teaching assistants always wore suits, the trainers more casual wear. While this was not a problem, it highlighted yet another difference. At first the TAs worried about certain elements of non-formal education methodology, for example, the use of energisers. All the classrooms in the university had one glass wall, meaning everything you did inside could be witnessed by students and teaching staff. As one of the TAs stated at one of the early evaluation meetings, "I am a teacher here; I cannot be seen to be running around like a chicken. I have respect and position to maintain." Not an easy

issue to resolve. In those early days, the TAs did less energisers and games/activities than the trainers and generally did not take part in them. However, in time, they became more comfortable and less worried, though I think the dilemma remains.

Using the territory, space and equipment of the university also brought its own issues. Classrooms are set as classrooms with tables and chairs, etc. Creating the circle of chairs meant having to dismantle the classroom before every session and re-set it afterwards. Nothing could be left on the walls, putting flip charts onto the walls before a session and taking them off at the end, and so on.

The Issues for the TAs & Trainers

Interestingly, the TAs were sure that taking on this extra work was going to be easy, but they quickly discovered this extra work was really hard! One of them said in the mid-term evaluation of the first semester, "I thought this was going to be easy but it is so hard. I teach sociology, and I know what I am teaching in three weeks' time. On Tuesday afternoon, its page 108 of Haralambos Sociology text book. Now I am teaching a module this week, and I don't know what I am doing tomorrow!" The context here being that working in non-formal education, the group influences the programme and the programme needs to be flexible. This is especially so when dealing with process work where a long discussion might be necessary to deal with some issue in the group and so set the programme back. It is also about responding to the needs of the students and adjusting or entirely changing activities to meet their learning needs. Formal education is more rigid and is traditionally less flexible, allowing a teacher to know well in advance what they will be teaching and when.

Another of the TAs said, "I never knew they [the students] knew so much." This was said in relation to how much input the students were giving in the course. The TAs came from a culture where the teacher simply arrives, gives the information and leaves. In this course they

were continuously entering into dialogue with the students, asking them questions and being asked questions. It was almost as if the TAs had entered a new world. The TAs quickly came to realise that the non-formal education approach is far from easy and much more complicated than the approach they were used to taking.

For the trainers there were also a lot of adjustments to be made. Realising they did not have all the answers and that they did not have the freedom they perceived they should have. It was not easy for the trainers to step back and admit the TAs knew better on some things. Clearly the TAs had been involved in education for much longer than the trainers, while the trainers were all relatively inexperienced and new to the training field at that stage. Added to this, the trainers level of freedom to do things as they perceived they should be able to be limited; first by the fact that they had to work with a TA, and secondly they were working within the confines of the university. The TAs had their opinions about how things should be done, though to be fair they spent a lot of time asking how an activity should be developed or run. Sometimes the results were excellent and sometimes they were disastrous. As with any university there are rules and regulations, written and unwritten. The trainers needed to understand how things worked and what

restrictions they had to live with. Many a time, one or more of the trainers would meet with me to complain about the 'stupid' rules or their

frustrations at their TA colleagues' inability to understand what a basic concept was for them.

The End

Despite the difficult beginnings, the two teams in the end worked well together and produced a good course for the students, some of whom became good youth workers. I say 'some' because youth work is still not recognised as a profession in FYROM/Macedonia, meaning there are not many youth worker jobs available. What I have described here is a fraction of the whole experience. For me, it was two hard but very enjoyable years where I also learned a huge amount for my own development as a trainer from observing their work. What I don't include here is the long hard road taken by the NGO

and university staff to develop that partnership. There were many meetings, papers, reports and more meetings. Despite both the NGO and university being involved in educational work they were very far apart in terms of needs, values, approaches and attitudes. All this had to be overcome by dedicated and hard working people from both sides. But it worked and continues to work effectively to the best of my knowledge.

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Malta: Combining theory and practice: youth and community studies

In 1993, the University of Malta, initiated a course for youth and community workers. At that time, there was no full-time professional youth work service in Malta. The Department of Youth and Community Studies within the Faculty of Social Well Being now offers a part-time five year BA programme in Youth and Community Studies that combines a theoretical base in sociology, psychology and education and practical community based assignments for professional youth work. Candidates may also pursue an MA degree.

The first graduates of the course founded the Maltese Association of Workers (MAY) who acquired professional recognition from the Maltese Federation of Professional Associations, that allowed youth worker representation on government consultations, along with other professionals, in the development of relevant policy areas. MAY's aim of establishing youth work as a fully recognised profession culminated in the Professional Youth Work Bill which was presented to the Maltese Parliament in 2012. The Bill gives formal professional recognition and status to youth workers, as well as regulating the profession and determining the qualifications and conditions under which youth workers can acquire such recognition.

While the first National Youth Policy dates back to 1993, reviews were subsequently published leading to the present revised National Youth Policy (2010-2013) that was launched in 2010.

This revised youth policy was innovative in two ways. First, it built on existing policy while at the same time it took into account recent developments in youth policy development, particularly at European level. Second, for the first time an instrument for implementing, developing and coordinating youth policy was put in place: Aгенzija Zghazagh. The policy is underpinned by fundamental principles of Accessibility, Sustainability, Solidarity, Diversity and Equality that are to be supported through Consultation, Research, Accountability and Efficiency and Effectiveness.

With a view to implementing and coordinating Malta's National Youth Policy, Agenzija Zghazagh, the National Youth Agency, was established and commenced operation in February 2011. The agency has undertaken a number of important initiatives in its first two years of operation. These include: a web portal Youth information Malta that provides both information for young people on a range of issues as well as a platform to air their views and activities; an extensive empowerment programme as well as programmes and projects in arts, culture, media, education, volunteering and civil society; and research into youth people's lives. In addition, the agency has opened youth activity centres, youth cafes and youth hubs.

Malta has the advantage, in light of its size and population, of being able to develop a coordinated approach to the training and development of youth workers through a coordinated cross-sectors approach that combines the expertise and experience of both the formal and non-formal education and learning sectors. The cohort of youth workers in Malta in terms of both their professional training and development can be said to be products of both the formal and non-formal education sectors. The University of Malta, Agenzija Zghazagh, professional associations

such as MAY and the European Union Programme Agency (EUPA) which manages the Youth in Action programme work together in ensuring the ongoing training and development of youth workers and their active participation in this process. The existing cohort of youth work professionals for the most part share a common experience: theory and practices at university; membership of professional body; working with Agency Zghazagh, NGOs, schools or other youth service providers; ongoing training and development under Youth in Action and Agenzija Zghazagh. A non formal education programme is set out in fact at the beginning of the year so that youth workers can plan ahead their training according to their needs. An overarching policy framework for the training and ongoing development of youth workers through formal education structures i.e. the University of Malta and non-formal learning structures i.e. Agenzija Zghazagh and EUPA thus exists. The common education and learning structures combined with shared education and learning experiences provide youth workers in Malta with processes and tools that enabled them not alone to benefit from formal and non-formal education and learning but also to employ them in working with young people.

My own experiences in the youth field are personal but not necessarily unique. Like others, I had for long been active in youth work on a part-time basis before being among the first to graduate in Youth and Community Studies at the University of Malta. I was among the founding members of MAY and in due course became a lecturer with the Department of Youth and Community Studies before being appointed Chief Executive of Agenzija Zghazagh. However, I have continued to lecture at university as well as cooperate with my university colleagues on a number of youth projects. As Chief Executive of Agenzija Zghazagh I have worked with my colleagues in MAY and the EUPA on a number of Youth in Action projects for the ongoing professional development of youth workers. Many of the projects have centred on the development of learning tools for professional youth work including the use of for example drama. Two training programmes have been developed by trainers who are qualified in drama and myself to engage Youth and Community Studies students who are on their placement use drama as a tool for youth work. Students practice drama skills and at the same time participate in workshops to discuss how to use such skills when working with young people. Themes range from using drama as a tool to motivate young people become more

participative to using drama as a tool to work with young people having challenging behaviour.

These experiences are in large part those of my fellow youth workers in Malta: relevant third-level qualifications; professional status and recognition; employment in a youth agency / organisation or education/training institution; ongoing professional development through the formal or non-formal sectors and qualification recognition.

Common education and learning and shared experiences and practices are as important as structures and methods that seek to combine the benefits of both formal and non-formal education and learning for the training and development of youth workers. Indeed such structures and methods are unlikely to be successful without shared learning and experience among the community of youth workers.

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