

STANDARDS FOR OPEN YOUTH CENTRES IN EUROPE

POSITION PAPER



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Why and how to promote Youth Work

Youth Centres

Open Youth Centres are a fundamental need for local communities, all communities must have an independent, autonomous and reliable space for young people, an anchor in the social life of the community.

Open Youth Centres are an accessible, barrier-free and safe environment allowing and enabling youngsters to better understand the reality around them. The spaces of an Open Youth Centre must be sustainable and multifunctional to provide as many activities as young people need.

Local youth is the real owner of the space. It's theirs to run activities aimed at an individual, group and generational growth. Because of this a youth centre must be regulated with a contract to be as long as possible according to national regulations to grant continuity, reliability, sustainability and fairness in the opportunities provided.

Youth Work

Youth Work and Open Youth Work have different quality standards to be respected, each with own measures and indicators. Recognition of Youth Work is an achievement for all EU states and partner countries involved in European Programmes for Youth. Youth Workers and/or NGOs have representatives working together in a Council addressing the needs and the trends of Youth Work all around Europe.

Youth workers

Youth Workers operating in an Open Youth Centre must be professional, experienced and hired based as working contract.

The professional stability of youth workers is positively reflecting on their approach with both the youth and the job itself. Competences, such as basics of psychology and sociology, Non-Formal Education methodologies and techniques, coaching methods, are needed and, because of that, they are also quantifiable in terms of salary and working hours.

To achieve this, all EU Countries must recognise youth work as a profession and not a craft. A Youth Centre has a proper number of staff members in accordance to the amount of young people living in the neighbourhood/area/town.



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Volunteering in youth centres

Volunteering is a proper mean of engagement so it is regulated and recognised.

Partnerships with educational institutions allow youngsters to have their volunteering recognized as learning process through their involvement in Youth Centres.

The cooperation between educational institutions with Youth Centres is part of a quality standard for schools and universities in order to increase the availability of learning opportunities for youngsters.

Resources

Youth Centres have access to resources through different programmes instituted and regulated by local, regional, national and/or international institutions.

Part of the financial resources are available directly to young people in order to devolve initiative, responsibility and accountability.

Resources are not just meant to be financial but also in terms of materials, equipment, support and access to decision makers.



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