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European Academy on Youth Work Event

Third Edition

FINAL REPORT

Future Developments and their
Impact on Youth Work

by Nik Paddison



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The European Academy on Youth Work aims to promote the development of **quality youth work** and to support its **capacity to react to current and future developments**. To this end, **it focuses on supporting innovation in youth work**, as a response to the trends, challenges and uncertainties faced by young people in today's fast-changing societies. The EAYW offers a **platform for exchange and knowledge gathering on trends and developments** in and with relevance to the youth field in Europe, and on **innovative youth work responses** to these trends and developments. It is a long-term strategic cooperation of National Agencies of the Erasmus+ programme, youth field, and the European Solidarity Corps and SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres.

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01

Introduction to the **Third European Academy on Youth Work Event**

“One of the interesting things about this topic is learning to say ‘futures’ with an ‘s’ at the end all the time”

Özgehan Şenyuva

EUROPEAN ACADEMY ON YOUTH WORK STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

The European Academy on Youth Work (EAYW) aims to promote the development of quality youth work, to support its capacity to react to current and future developments, and to contribute to creating a common ground for youth work and youth work policy. To this end, it focuses on supporting innovation in youth work as a response to the trends, challenges and uncertainties faced by young people in today’s fast-changing societies.

The EAYW is a strategic partnership of 14 National Agencies for Erasmus+ Youth and the European Solidarity Corps programmes, with MOVIT as its coordinating partner. Additionally, an Advisory Board consisting of stakeholders from the European youth work field guides the content development of each EAYW edition.

The third EAYW was hosted by MOVIT, the Slovenian National Agency for Erasmus+, youth field, and the European Solidarity Corps, in Kranjska Gora, Slovenia, from the 14th to 17th May 2024. The theme was ‘Future Developments and their Impact on Youth Work’.



OBJECTIVES AND FOCUS

The specific objectives of the third EAYW were to:

- Jointly explore emerging trends and future developments and discuss their possible impact on youth work;
- Showcase and mainstream a variety of innovative practices, approaches and strategies developed in response to these developments and
- Foster networking and innovative thinking about the futures of youth work within the community.

In order to support the achievement of these objectives, three main questions were explored throughout the event:

- What will youth work look like in the future?
- How can we get ready for futures thinking?
- How can we act, plan and envision for a future of youth work we don't know?

As the quote at the top of the page states, this EAYW was about “futures”. The reason for using ‘future’ in the plural all the time is that there is not one single future ahead but multiple possible futures. The EAYW, along with experts, researchers, and the collective knowledge of the participants, explored and analysed the emerging societal trends. It looked at how they impact and influence youth work, providing direction for understanding the potential futures of youth work and how the sector needs to be preparing for them.

The EAYW also showcased 24 innovative practices through participants’ contribu-

tions, either as presentations or workshops. There were 14 other projects, concepts and tools shared during a Community Evening, and six areas of international youth work discussed in ‘Lounges’ throughout the course of the EAYW.

PARTICIPANTS

There were over 200 participants representing a broad spectrum of the youth work community of practice, most of them coming from a large portion of Europe and its neighbouring regions.

The participants included an international group of twenty students in youth work, social work or related studies coming from five universities. The students participated in the event and also carried out a specific mini-research project. In addition, a group of 12 youth workers, all students at NUI Certificate course on Adult and Community Education at Maynooth University, took part in the EAYW event as a part of their studies.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS

Everyone was encouraged to use an official hashtag #EAYW, which helped to pass information, updates and content to those who were not able to attend the event. The social media aspect has two main reasons of importance. Firstly, encouraging the participants to post with the hashtag made the EAYW more visible to the wider youth work community.

Secondly, two of the inputs were live streamed to allow for a much larger audience to join the EAYW, who could not attend in person.

02

Report Structure

“What happens in the Academy doesn’t stay in the Academy!”

Darko Markovic

There were four key parts of the EAYW, which form the basis of this report. The report also includes key takeaways from the opening speeches and closing elements, a summary of the mini-research conducted by a group of youth work students, and participants’ reflections of the 24 Forums that consisted of pres-

entations or workshops of various youth work practices. Additionally, a game was created and produced specifically for the EAYW on the theme of ‘futures’ and future-readiness, which was played by all the participants. Links to the game, the Forum descriptions and key note speeches can be found in Annex 2.



THE CONCEPT OF FUTURES WORK



The introduction to futures work came from Adanna Shallowe - international affairs analyst, network weaver, and facilitator - who introduced the EAYW to the concept of futures work and the different aspects of it. This helped the participants to understand that foresight and futures work is not something that only experts can be involved in, but that in reality, we are all involved in futures work and we all need to raise our awareness of it.

THE FUTURES OF YOUTH WORK

The first input was followed by a summary of the EAYW research on “The Futures of Youth Work”. This session explored the findings of the research and laid out cross-cutting themes as well as eight trends, to which the research team added four scenarios to each trend.



PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The final chapter explores a model called “quadrants”, and summarises the participants’ responses to individual and collective “inner work” (how we are developing as youth workers) and “external developments” (what does the youth sector need).



GETTING FUTURE-READY!

The third chapter explores how to get future-ready, based on the research and our understanding of futures work. The chapter opens numerous questions and challenges to both individuals and the sector as a whole.

The report focuses on these four parts, but also includes other outcomes of the EAYW event, including the Forums and the students’ research. Additional information can be found in the appendices.

03

Insights and Questions

***"The past is tense, the present is simple and
the future is perfect".***

Zadie Smith

Prior to the EAYW, the team of facilitators sent a message to all the participants asking them for their insights and questions regarding the future of youth work. The following are the key insights and key questions as expressed by the participants, which provide an insight into some of the thinking about futures work that many participants had before the EAYW. Interestingly, many of the insights and questions were explored as part of the agenda of the three days.



INSIGHTS

Some participants pointed out the need for a focus on the present and flexibility among youth workers, being prepared for “the now” rather than overly fixating on predicting the future. It was stated that youth workers need to be flexible and adaptable to effectively respond to current realities and challenges.

Understanding the future requires entering the world of young people, listening to them, and understanding life from their perspective. Youth work should be holistic and representative, adapting to evolving societal norms and global challenges.

Technology will play a significant role in youth work in the future, aiding in accessibility and innovation. However, it also presents challenges, such as an increased sense of loneliness and having potentially negative impact on young people’s men-

tal health. Addressing the mental health and well-being of young people is becoming more and more vital, considering various stressors including technology, education, and the environment.

The need for basic human interaction remains crucial. Maintaining face-to-face connections with young people is important for their social stability and their mental health.

Youth work should inspire hope, empowerment, and resilience, enabling young people to both navigate and positively influence societal changes. Youth workers should also be prepared for unknown challenges with a resilient mindset, open to questioning previous practices, learning new skills, and adapting their methods to stay relevant. Youth work needs to be proactive in preparing for future challenges, and while the future is inherently uncertain, there is also potential for positive change and growth.

QUESTIONS

Why are we so determined to predict or guess the future?

- A number of questions focused on this aspect of ‘why do we need to be looking to the future?’ Are we trying to prove our worth, our value, and our importance? Does it really matter? Will things change so much? Would it not be better to try and work out what we need for the work in ‘the now’?

How can youth work remain meaningful in an ever-evolving world, with changing societal norms and global challenges?

- This question also came with many linked questions on how to equip young people, and how to support them in finding the right opportunities.

How can youth work become a more holistic and representative practice?

- This needs youth workers to question their practices and methods, to be open to learning and changing traditional ways of working. How to ensure that youth programmes and activities remain relevant to the rapidly changing social and technological landscape?



And finally, five stand-alone questions:

- How can youth work help young people to connect with each other locally while also thinking globally?
- How to deal with mental health and wellbeing and the potential risks related to technology?
- How can youth work shape the future collectively?
- How can youth work prevent undesirable scenarios from becoming reality?
- How can youth work foster empathy and mutual understanding?

04

Opening

“Youth work cannot remain on the side-lines of the process”

Anonymous

The event started with three opening speeches, which provided some background on the major youth work frameworks at the European level and started the process for futures thinking for this third edition of the EAYW. The three speakers were Sophia Eriksson Waterschoot, Director for Youth, Education and Erasmus+, DG EAC, European Commission; Charalampos Papaioannou, Policy Officer, SNE-Youth policy and Programmes, DG EAE, European Commission; and Uroš Skrinar, director of MOVIT. All three speakers gave updates on many of the big European youth work projects and provided information on their potential futures.

EUROPEAN YEAR OF YOUTH

Sophia Eriksson Waterschoot shared that the European Year of Youth 2022 had been a great success, so the Commission explored how the momentum from it could continue. As a result, 60 actions were recommended on how to concretely give young people a stronger voice in policy making and how youth mainstreaming should become the normal way of working.





EU YOUTH STRATEGY

Both Sophia and Charalampos Papaioannou highlighted the interim evaluation of the EU Youth Strategy. The report shows that the Strategy is effective in addressing young people's concerns and has contributed to both the development of quality youth work and the recognition of youth work. The European Commission is currently proposing ideas for ways to further enhance the impact of the various instruments in the Strategy, including the EU Youth Dialogue. They are also planning consultations with the youth sector for the new EU Youth Strategy.

ERASMUS+ YOUTH AND THE EUROPEAN SOLIDARITY CORPS PROGRAMMES

The mid-term evaluation is underway with the results expected at the end of 2024. Uroš Skrinar pointed out that planning for the new programmes (to be launched in 2027) will also start at the end of 2024. Sophia explained that the Commission will be asking for inputs and ideas from young people and youth workers for the next generation of Erasmus+

Youth and European Solidarity Corps programmes. Events such as the EAYW and the Convention should also contribute.

EUROPEAN YOUTH WORK AGENDA

According to Charalampos, one aspect of the interim evaluation of the Youth Strategy that had already been identified was that the European Youth Work Agenda (EYWA) was strengthening the policy base for quality youth work. Thanks to the EYWA, there is a common framework that the member states have agreed to follow, but at the same time, there are a lot of different understandings about youth work and there are different levels of youth work development from country to country. He stated that “we need to remember that when we are talking about youth work, we are not talking about the same thing all over Europe. We are talking about very different things from country to country and from region to region.” To tackle this issue, there needed to be a proposal for further mutual learning activities through the European Youth Work Agenda.

4TH EUROPEAN YOUTH WORK CONVENTION

The 4th European Youth Work Convention will take place in Malta in May 2025. This is a great opportunity for youth work with almost all the member states of the continent of Europe sending delegations, and there will also be representatives from across the youth work community of practice. The EYWC provides the space to meet, discuss and plan for the next five years of youth work in Europe.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE FUTURE

Uroš Skrinar shared that a recent presentation by Sitra from Finland showed that more than fifty percent of young people think that society is doomed;

however, more than eighty percent believe that they can influence the future. Young people are quite aware of the challenges, though many do not know what to do about them, even if they know that they need to be getting ready for those challenges.

The European elections in early June 2024 saw the forming of the new European Parliament. This Parliament will be deciding about many issues that are of a real concern to young people, from health and well-being, environment and climate, to education and training, employment and inclusion, and common values of peace and democracy. The questions that link to this are: “What should be the role of youth work here? Is youth work ready? How can youth work get itself ready?”.



05

The Concept of Futures Work

***“The purpose of thinking of the future is
to disturb the present.”***

Anonymous

Adanna Shallowe provided an input on futures work that set the foundation for the theme of the EAYW and introduced most of the participants to the concept. Adanna is an international affairs analyst, a skilled network weaver and facilitator. As a foresight practitioner, Adanna has co-authored a research report entitled “A stitch in time? Realising the value of futures and foresight”.

FORESIGHT

Foresight is the capacity to think systematically about the future using a toolbox of methods and approaches. The concept of ‘Futures work’ or hearing about ‘Foresight methods’ for the first time can feel intimidating and something only experts do. In reality, it is something we are all engaged in or can engage in. A game designed and built by Anita Silva for the EAYW was introduced to the participants during the first session of the EAYW, ‘Window to the Future’. The game revealed

to participants the concepts of ‘archetypes’, ‘scenario planning’, ‘visioning’ and ‘horizon scanning’ (see Appendices 1 for an explanation of the game). During her input, Adanna also engaged the participants in a ‘futures thinking’ exercise.

Futures work is about challenging our existing assumptions, and exploring new and alternative futures in order to take action. This is something that is easy to say, but not so easy to do, especially when the present is already very challenging.

PREDICTIONS AND LINEAR THINKING

One of the points that Adanna wanted to emphasise was that futures work is not about making predictions. It is about exploring possibilities that may or may not happen, it is not about stating that “this will happen”. She explained that we are brought up to think in a linear way, which is one of the reasons why people

sometimes see futures work as predictions: Society and the education system have us believing that our futures are all mapped out. You go to school, graduate, get a job, get promoted several times, retire, and live out your days on a beach. Linear thinking is that if you do A, it is followed by B, then C will naturally happen. But that does not happen, not in the real world.

Linear thinking is something we are taught while futures thinking is something we do naturally. As humans, we are constantly thinking of numerous futures that are possible, but we are generally not so conscious of doing so. There are powerful influences that keep us in a short-term mindset; however, we need to train ourselves to have a long-term mindset.

FUTURES THINKING

Adanna invited the participants to do a futures-thinking exercise. She asked the participants to “look back over the last ten years and think about the factors that have influenced youth work”. Some of the responses included:

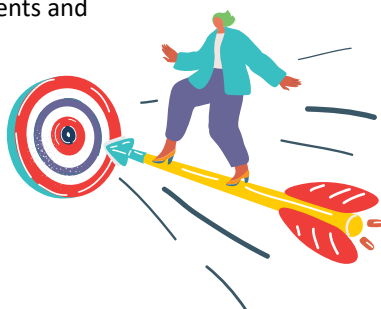
- Pandemic;
- Technology;
- Social and economic crises;
- Environment;
- War;
- Professionalising of youth work in some countries;
- Erasmus+ funding criteria;
- European youth work events and policies.

She then asked, “what are the factors that you think will influence youth work in the next ten years?”. The participants responses included:

- Climate change;
- Policy directions, political impact;
- War;
- AI;
- Less young people than older people;
- Attention span narrowing down;
- Political and civic engagement by young people;
- Youth work will be influenced by whatever is happening in the world.

Adanna explained that the results and responses of this exercise produce a list of emerging trends and events that can influence the future of something. These are called the ‘drivers of change’.

The table below from the research “A stitch in time?” shows the different drivers the research team came up with; Environmental crisis, Ageing and diversifying population, etc. It is not a complete list; many other drivers could be added for different contexts. The table shows the main global trends that are affecting all of us and these are called ‘Macro’ drivers. However, there are also ‘Micro’ drivers, these are the things that are happening in a person’s community, country or region. We also need very much to be aware of these as well as global trends.



Environmental crisis	Ageing and diversifying population	Power changes	Centrality of technology	The future of the economy	Potential 'wild-card' disruptors
Climate crisis	Higher life expectancy and ageing population	Move to a poly-modal world	Tech transforming production and operating models	Massive wealth inequality	Financial crises
More extreme weather phenomenon	Declining birth rates	Decline of US as global hegemon	Increasing ubiquity of AI, automation and 'big data'	Shift of economic power away from the Global North	Global pandemics
Limited resource availability	Urbanisation and population concentration	Resurgence of nationalism and autocracy	New forms of medical technology	New structures of work including 'gig-work' and zero hour contracts	Energy transition
Soil degradation	Increased migration, especially climate-based	New social movements	Increased prevalence of genetic engineering and synthetic biology	Growth of the circular economy	Revolts and regime change
Decreased biodiversity	Stronger role for women	Rise of disinformation	Cheaper renewable energy	Post-materialism and on-demand service models	Limitations of institutional power
Shift to low carbon societies	Increased health comorbidities	Cultural divergence and polarisation, e.g., young/old; rural/urban; wealthy/poor etc.	Cyber-security	Global (white collar) organised crime	
New forms of protein and sustainable food sources	Generational handover				

Adanna Shallowe, Aleksandra Szymczyk, Ella Firebrace, Ian Burbidge and James Morrison "A Stitch in time?", p. 24. RSA 2020.

HORIZON SCANNING

Horizon scanning is a way to explore three sets of future trends:



Horizon 1 - short term, what is clearly visible and understandable.



Horizon 2 - medium term, emerging trends taking shape, though their exact form and impact are not clear. Horizon 2 is the interesting, creative and challenging part. There are things happening now that you don't like, so you try to get rid of those things. There are things happening that you do like, so you want to try and keep those things, and there are things that you really want to try, to experiment with and dedicate some time to. In Adanna's words, "horizon 2 is the arena of transformation, where we are watering the seeds and getting rid of the weeds."



Horizon 3 - long term, highlights challenges and strategic issues that may arise in the long term. It allows you to think about the futures you want to envision, what is this amazing thing that you want to have happening in five to ten years' time? What is it that you want to work towards?



imagine themselves in a future scenario and explore what living in that future feels like.

You do 'visioning' when you have a goal or vision of a preferred future that you want to happen. You literally envision what you want it to look like and strategically work towards that.

If there is something that you think could be a wild card, that something unexpected might happen, then it is good to conduct 'scenario planning'. What are the likely scenarios to be, what will they look like, what will be their impact, and so on.

ARCHETYPES, VISIONING AND SCENARIO PLANNING

The game of the first morning was a simulation of futures work. The game required the participants to explore different futures by coming up with different scenarios. The role the participants played is called 'archetypes', it is where people

POWER DYNAMICS

When there are groups, there are going to be power dynamics. One of the things people like to do in futures work is to disturb and invert those power dynamics. Introduce role playing, for example, turn senior management into the customers, and the customers into senior managers.

This can produce thoughts, reflections and insights that would otherwise remain hidden.

STORYTELLING

An important part of futures work is recognising the power of storytelling within it. Ella Saltmarshe talks about stories in three ways: stories as light, glue, and webs. When conducting futures work and utilising the different methods, it can help to see, in this case the futures of youth work, by thinking about it in these three concepts of stories, because the stories can help make visible alternative or possible futures.

★ **Story as light** helps us to expose things when they are not working. It shows the cracks. It helps us to identify things on the edge of our vision and illuminate experiences.

★ **Story as glue.** Storytelling is a very powerful ingredient. It helps communities to build empathy, to create collective visions of the future, and build a shared sense of purpose.

★ **Story as web.** This is where futures are really important. Stories are woven through everything we are, and are part of everything that we do, and oftentimes they are invisible to us because like a spider's web, they are part of our society, they are in our cultural and societal norms.

WHO IS WE?

When 'we' talk about futures, it is important that we recognise, who is the 'we'? Me. You. Us. Who is in the conversations, who is managing those conversations, who is included and perhaps more importantly, who is not included? For a futures exercise to be considered legitimate, it must be inclusive. Futures work needs diverse perspectives, and every single voice matters. There needs to be space for 'experts' and there needs to be space for non-experts. Sometimes, the non-experts will see or say things that you and all the experts have missed. There are also those who are hard to reach or unable to easily participate because of societal barriers and there are those who will not want to participate. All this means working harder to get these groups and individuals involved.



06

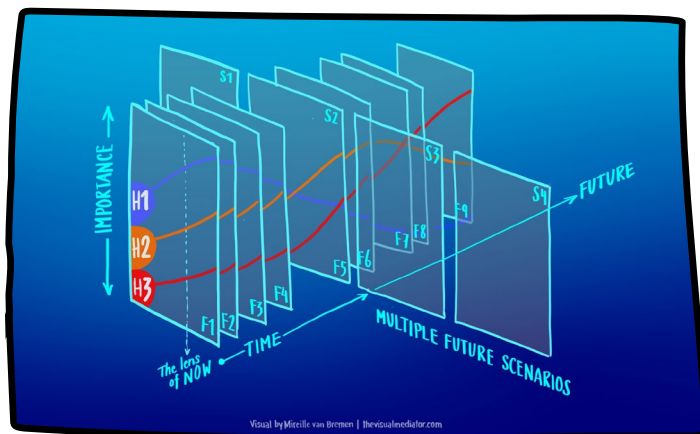
Futures of Youth Work

"I have to say, writing the report of this research is a race against time. We started some time ago and some things are already in the past."

Özgehan Şenyuva

Sonja Mitter Škulj introduced the research: 'Futures of youth work'. The Steering Group of the EAYW commissioned it in the spring of 2023. She explained that the EAYW has a strong focus on innovation, and that innovation should reflect what is happening in society as a response to present and emerging trends and developments. At the second EAYW in 2022,

a guest speaker, Professor Gary Pollock from Manchester Metropolitan University, presented research they had done on developing future scenarios related to young people. Inspired by this input, the EAYW Steering Group felt it was important to explore what the possible future developments in youth work might be.



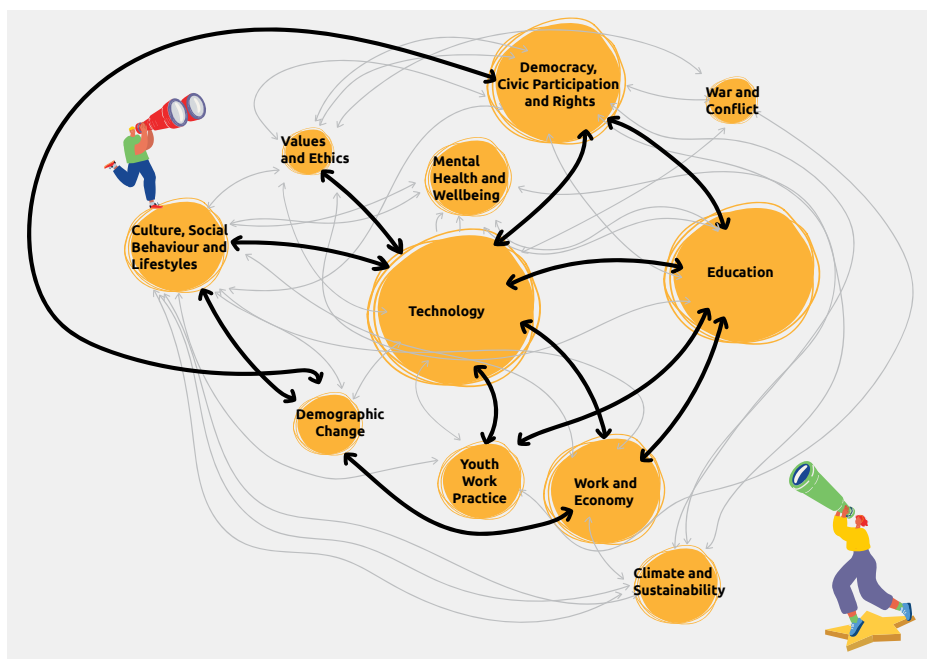
FUTURES OF YOUTH WORK RESEARCH PROJECT

The research was conducted by Aleksandra Szymczyk, Darko Markovic, Gisele Evrard and Özgehan Şenyuva. Aleksandra and Özgehan presented the overview of the research and Gisele presented the emerging messages, key questions and insights from the draft research report.

Özgehan began by sharing their shared image of the research concept: “The past is behind and the future is ahead, and we are looking towards the future and we are walking towards the future. But once you start thinking and going deeper, you realise that in reality, we are walking backwards. What we see is the past and the present, which makes the future lie behind us, which we don’t see.”

Methodology

The research team engaged a large group of people they called ‘Signal Spotters’ from September to October 2023. They were a diverse group of people from across Europe. Signal spotting is listening to and recording what is happening around us, the recorded information is analysed, and trends are identified. It was important that the signal spotters paid attention to even the weakest of signals and drew from as diverse sources as possible. Sources could include, the mainstream news about the war in Ukraine, a conversation at a flea market about the loss of analogue skills, campaigns on social media, or casual conversations at home or work about something happening locally.



The team also conducted interviews with experts from the fields of youth work, academia, technology, and other fields.

All insights were seen as potentially valuable, so nothing was excluded. All the signals were read, collated and connected through relationships as seen in the map of trends and themes below. These trends and themes are explored in the next pages.

The third part of the research was a “Resonance Workshop” in February 2024. This workshop was held with the purpose to test and further analyse the initial findings. It brought together a broader group of people who examined the results and so agreed with or challenged them, in order to help spot any limitations or bias the team had employed. The resonance workshop made it clear: Not all futures are in the future for everyone, for some people some of the things are in the present or even already in the past.

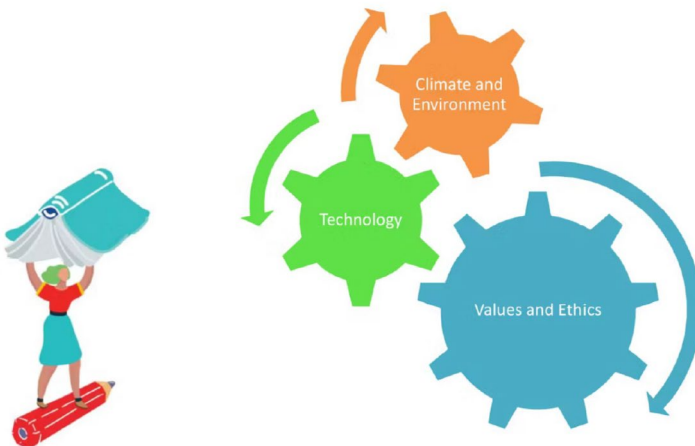
Future foresight issues

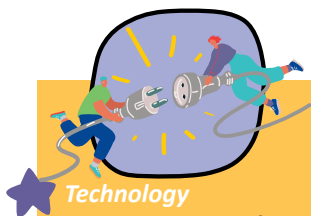
Some aspects of future foresight work can evoke emotions and reactions; for some imagining the long-term future can be anxiety-inducing and overwhelming, particularly if you are thinking about difficult issues, challenges, and problems. However, it also has the potential to empower. It is important to monitor the feelings and reactions that arise in us, because our perceptions and attitudes about the future will influence what will unfold. Not all futures are distributed equally. Those facing poverty, racism, and other forms of discrimination are disadvantaged in futures as well. In some cases, the future in question may come later or even not at all.

Cross-cutting themes

The mapping process revealed three cross-cutting themes. They are the issues that are transversal and connecting to almost everything else in all the other spheres. The three cross-cutting themes also affect each other constantly.

Cross-Cutting Themes





Technology

Technology was often mentioned in the signals. One thing of note about this theme is that it can do good and it can do harm. It can support access to education through VR and AI, for instance. It can help make education more accessible and it can be customised, and personalised. On the other hand, technology can help and contribute to the erosion of analogue skills. It can contribute negatively to mental well-being and feelings of isolation.

Climate and sustainability

Climate and sustainability affect each other as well as other issues. One of the key issues that came up is climate refugees. Co-dependence and resource-sharing are issues of the future. Climate and environment also create climate induced anxiety, again linking with mental well-being issues.



Values and ethics

Values and ethics raise big questions about where youth work will stand on different areas of concern, including AI ethics, data privacy, deep fakes, the radicalisation of young people fuelled by divisive propaganda, etc. All underscore the need for critical thinking. Reconciling these complex issues will require dialogue and facilitation.

Trends and Scenarios

The trends are the core areas that were identified from the signal spotters' inputs and overall research. There are eight trends identified in total, each trend being accompanied by four scenarios, which describe the possible future directions of each trend. Some of the scenarios contradict each another but these contradictions are coexisting; it is not a matter of either or. The trends do not exist in isolation, but they influence and shape each other in intricate ways. Below are the eight trends with a short description of each scenario. For the full explanation, see the Research Report (to be published in October 2024).



Demographic changes



Segregation and political polarisation by age

Age-specific residential areas, age-based segregation, lack of intergenerational understanding and cooperation, young people discriminated against.



Intergenerational bonds

Intergenerational living might become the norm, limited access to elderly care, and limited access to the housing market for young people.



Youth work evolving into community work

Youth work may evolve into work with the elderly or intergenerational community work. Youth work is to think more holistically about the needs of whole communities.



Solidarity for the age of Anthropocene

Anthropocene is the age where human activity has resulted in the loss of places of refuge, not just for humans but for other species as well, resulting in climate migration.

Culture, social behaviour and lifestyle



Immersive entertainment

Entertainment access is changing someone from being a passive receiver to having a customised participatory experience. People can create images with zero talent in drawing. Is it good? Bad?



Sustainable journey mapping

Travel experiences and travel practises will change. Potentially, in the future, there will be less tourism and more travellers in search of an experience.



Digital nomadism 2.0.

New forms of flexible work and economy encourage workers out of metropolitan cities. However, are people being parasites living off societies with nice climates while giving nothing in return?



Divisive mis/disinformation

FIMI, Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference. A lot of research and policy guidelines are being developed. Young people are both the recipient and producers of FIMI.

Democracy, civic participation, and rights



Youth representation.

We are seeing a diminishing political influence of young people alongside different forms of interest and participation.



Grassroots initiatives and decentralisation.

Youth participation in activism is on the increase especially on topics such as climate change and equality and rights, which points to civic participation centred on social justice.



Questioning of legacy institutions.

There is a diminishing belief in democracy and in the civic sphere, there is a growing polarisation in political discourse, democratic backsliding, and an overall lack of trust in public institutions.



Rethinking governance models.

There are innovative approaches to civic engagement, including those enabled by technology.

Education



Self-driven passion learning.

Issues of access to education and learning. It is also about individuals learning different things at their own pace, personalised and democratised learning.



Personalised AI tutors.

Personalised AI tutors, personalised learning experiences, deciding when you are going to learn history and how you are going to be evaluated. Customised learning.



Novel education models.

The future scenarios are all about different experiences and interdisciplinary learning.



Learning in simulation.

Simulation, immersive experiences, and safe skill experimentation via augmented reality. In medicine, students are learning through experience without cutting real people.

Work and economy



Gig economics and portfolio careers.

In work and the economy, there are unstable and uncertain futures with young people taking on numerous professional changes over time- flexibility over stability.



Entrepreneurship ecosystems and circular economy models.

Creative problem solving and the continuous development of new competencies.



Degrowth agendas and rethinking of economic models.

Changes provide both a challenge and an opportunity, they also point to emerging concerns around environmental responsibility.



Specialised credentialing systems.

Young people exploring new pathways to employment, which points to a need for a pragmatic economic shift.

Mental health and wellbeing



Increased anxiety and depression.

Rising mental health issues- evidence points to young people experiencing this more and more.



Community and peer support networks

Making mental health issues and wellbeing accepted. For example, in preparing training courses and exchanges, recognising that some participants might be going through some issues.



Digital mental health solutions.

Smartwatches that inform about mental well-being issues and that can support a person to intervene before something becomes more serious.



Holistic approaches to wellbeing.

Integrating mental, physical and social health, and linking them to preparedness, resilience and education.

War and conflict



Increasing political tensions.

Global instability and the escalation of conflicts will continue to have profound effects on young people.



Humanitarian crises and displacement.

The displacement of people will see refugee populations continue to increase.



Trauma and mental health.

It is difficult to fully understand what others are going through but it is important to be addressing psychological impacts.



Peacebuilding and resilience.

It is important to find ways and potential avenues to respond appropriately to conflict. There are ethical reasons and practical responsibilities for talking more about it.

Youth work practice



Digital youth work.

There needs to be a greater focus on integrating technology in youth services.



Competency based approaches.

There needs to be a focus on how to deal with the new skills and competences, and new models of education- the youth sector is already coming up with solutions.



Inclusive youth work.

Addressing diversity and equity inclusion of different people, be it climate refugees or conflict refugees.



Sustainable and resilient practices.

Promoting long term wellbeing and sustainability; both need to be a stronger part of youth work.

REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH

Aleksandra and Özgehan highlighted the importance of the way in which we talk about these different matters, the way that we tell our stories and the way that we imagine the future, because it will have an effect on the reality that we live in.

It was asked if the composition of the signal spotters influenced the results. The response was that ultimately the outcomes are indeed influenced by the signal spotters, which is why the spotters were as diverse a group as possible. What might be positive for one, might mean something very negative for the other.

The scenarios under all of the trends can be happening at the same time. Most of them do not exclude each other, most are fairly complementary and some are even contradictory. There can be contradictory objectives and they can still coexist in the same reality. For example, there can be people pushing for a rethinking of governance models, employing big data systems to improve and streamline governance. On the other hand, there can be

people who are protesting and they want to completely change the system. These are two forces that have contradictory trajectories, but at the same time they can exist in the same society at the same time.

It is also important to note that the scenarios are not universal for everybody. This can depend on where something is happening. Is it in a city or in a village? It can depend on the country, the person, the class of that person, and so on.

THE NEXT STEP

The report of the research will be finalised and published in October 2024. The discussions and outcomes from the EAYW will be added to the report.



07

Getting Future-Ready!

"Our task is to make trouble, to stir up a potent response to devastating events, as well as to settle troubled waters and rebuild quiet places."

Donna Haraway: Staying with the Trouble

Gisele Evrard provided a short input after the presentation of the research results, in which she posed a number of questions and challenges for all of us as the community of practice to respond to.



ARE WE READY?

Gisele invited us to not look at the outcomes in a linear manner but really look at it all as being completely connected and interconnected. We can also challenge ourselves to look at the results from different perspectives, to not take a first impression and run with it but to stop and reflect if there are other ways to see something.

"The only constant in life is change" (Heraclitus) or as Gisele put it, "at one moment it was, and it will never be the same as it was before, and it will not be the same as it will be in a minute". There is one certainty in this world of uncertainties and that is change. The question then is, how ready are we to face change? And another question that came from a participant, "do we need to get ready, should we be getting ready, do we even have a choice?" A question that remains unanswered but one that needs consideration.

FUTURE-READINESS

Future-readiness is becoming a popular phrase, but what does it imply? It involves mindset, a future-ready mind, becoming familiar with future literacy, allowing ourselves to grow in comprehension, mental agility, flexibility, adaptability, and being ready to embrace uncertainties...

Being future-ready entails taking on a sense of agency, taking responsibility, and taking action. It is more than simply reading and comprehending, it is having something to say and saying it, it is about having something to do and doing it.

The research encourages us to rethink the purpose of youth work, especially its social role. Hillary Tierney stated that “the state is more interested in what youth work does for it, than what youth work does for young people”. What is the role

of youth work in this ever fast changing world? Do we keep doing what we have always done or do things have to change? If it is not broken, why fix it? What should remain, what needs to be adjusted, what needs to be changed, and what needs to be added? Rethinking the role of youth work for young people and for society is a step into a future-readiness mindset.

A SYSTEMIC APPROACH

The research team took a conscious decision to look at the results in a systemic way to support making sense of what has emerged in terms of the scenarios.

One aspect they wanted to look at more deeply was technology. In the mapping, technology got the biggest number of signals. While that makes it very prominent, it does not mean that it is the most important, but it is significant.



The team came up with a series of questions to challenge their assumptions and to find different ways to look at the trend. For example, what is behind technology that we are not yet seeing or not yet ready to see? Are we excluding something? Are we forgetting something because our focus is attracted there? What is there which is not yet visible but emerging?

These and many other questions are good for reflecting on each trend in the report.

HOW READY ARE WE?

Gisele also emphasised that we need to look at the things that we do not want to look at, the uncomfortable and unpleasant things, as well as the things we like. Many of the scenarios can come across as quite pleasant, but in reality, there are many aspects that point to things that most of us would not want to see happen. Also, there are bigger issues such as war, conflicts, mental health, climate issues, things that we know are coming or are already there, but might be increasing. We are already addressing these issues, however, as they take shape and become bigger, they might become painful to look at and address. How ready are we for these situations?

Another challenging question is, what do we need wake up calls about? Are we focussed on the symptoms of something and not actually tackling the root causes? Do we need to zoom out and look at some of these trends with a broader perspective?

THE PLACE OF YOUTH WORK

If we start to look at the root causes, how far do we go, what are our (as youth workers) limits, how far does our role go? What is the place of youth work? Are we doing too much, taking on roles that are not ours? At what point do we say, stop, enough, this is not the job of youth work? Where do we put the boundaries and how flexible are they?

INDIVIDUAL TO COLLECTIVE

We are in a time when we need to be shifting away from the individual to the collective, and that calls for empathy and connectivity. It is damaging to focus so much on individuals instead of collectives. The signals from the research indicate a need for thinking about things collectively. This does not mean that the individual does not have a role, but if we only focus on that, it is not going to work.

Everything is connected, not just human beings, it is about animals, insects, the environment, nature... In the report, all the areas and all the scenarios are connected. We need to be seeing this as a whole picture even if we need to address each area step by step.



FOCUS ON WHAT IS NOT ALREADY PRESENT

The map of the signals shows the trends and the links between these trends, the size of the circles represents the number of signals for any one trend. It is clear that technology is present and in the middle of everything. The lines in black show the clear connections, though it can be argued that some are missing, which also reminds us that anything like this has limitations. These bigger circles and solid black line connections show us what is already present. However, the grey lines represent the weaker signals, especially those on the periphery. These are potentially the issues that we will need to be working with tomorrow.

PROPOSAL

The research team also suggests four strategies for adapting to the future challenges.

Having a sense of agency

We need to adopt a reflected, grounded and embodied sense of agency. It is about co-creating; youth work can be very reactive and not proactive, we need to be co-creators, to take an active role and a grounded role in the development of youth work towards the futures. The difficulty is that this is a continuous dance between what is coming to an end, what we need to let go of, and what is emerging. We need to make judgements on what we need to embrace, because we cannot and should not do everything.

Structured conversation

We need more structured conversation spaces where we can discuss about the futures. The EAYW is one such space, the Convention is another, the European Platform for Learning Mobility is yet another. However, these spaces do not have to be big events, we need spaces that have different sizes and different contexts. We have to use all the available spaces to address the questions of the futures of youth work.

Embrace system change

We need to look at youth work in a systemic and holistic manner. Whatever actions we take, whatever move we make, we have to think of the consequences on the rest of the system. We need to keep in mind that any action we make influences the rest, especially at the policy level.

Transformation calls

We need to stay alert for transformation calls, to shift our mind to this awareness of the signals that we have around us, to engage with them, have the conversations, respond to the needs, and reflect on the impact for our work.

Gisele closed her input with a note of caution that this is not the end, the research report will take into account the findings, comments and outcomes of the EAYW, and even that is not the end because the futures of youth work is ongoing and without end.

08

Planning for the Future

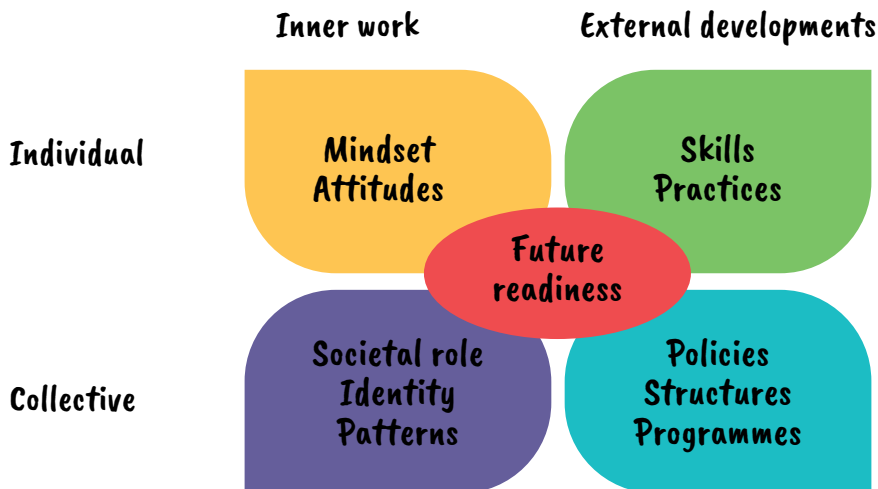
***“The moment we said future, the first syllable was
already in the past”.***

Based on a poem ‘The three oddest words’ by Wislawa Szymborska

The Future Foresight research highlighted the trends and provided scenarios as well as strategies for “getting future-ready”. Darko Markovic then led the participants into an exploration of how, in a practical sense, to get future-ready - both individually and collectively, and to consider the conditions, actions and resources that are needed for that. The objective was to develop concrete ideas and suggestions for the field of youth work. The outcomes are a message for the youth work community of practice, which gives inspiration for what we can be doing in the present.

The participants were divided into four groups, each group taking on one of the quadrants. They were provided with a specific question for their quadrant, which was then discussed and explored collectively in the context of the emerging trends and signals. Each group produced proposals, ideas and strategies for the field of practice.





THE QUADRANT

The ‘Four Quadrants’ is a theoretical model developed by Ken Wilber, for the purpose of the EAYW it was adapted by Darko Marković to be a model for exploring future readiness. The quadrants model allows us to explore at the individual and collective levels, alongside, “inner work” (how we are developing as youth workers) and “external developments” (what does the youth sector need).¹

Below is a summary of how participants approached the strategies to get ‘future-ready’ and what they entail.

INNER WORK

– INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

Responding to the question: What are the ways to strengthen the individual youth workers’ mindset and readiness for exploring and addressing the future challenges?

One of the primary recommendations is to establish **strong support systems for youth workers. Creating collaborative platforms** where youth workers can share experiences, seek advice and offer support to one another can significantly increase their sense of community and belonging. These platforms can be online forums, regular meetups or professional networks that provide a space for mutual support and knowledge exchange.

Encouraging youth workers to engage in regular self-reflection is another important strategy. Tools such as journaling and reflection apps can help individuals to take time to think about their experiences, identify stressors and develop per-

¹ Inspired by Ken Wilber’s Integral theory; Ken Wilber, A brief history of everything (Boulder, CO: Shambhala Publications, 2017).

sonal strategies for coping. Self-reflection promotes greater self-awareness and can lead to more proactive management of mental health.

Recognition and celebrating achievements of youth work and youth workers can significantly improve feelings and mental health. Acknowledging those contributions and providing positive feedback helps them to feel valued and appreciated. This recognition can come from peers, managers, supervisors or the broader community and can take various forms, such as awards, public acknowledgements or personal notes of thanks.

Encouraging youth workers to step out of their comfort zones and explore different attitudes and points of view can promote personal growth and resilience. Being exposed to diverse perspectives can support them in developing a more adaptable and flexible mindset, which is crucial for managing the dynamic nature of youth work.

Incorporating sensory stimulants and creative tools into daily routines can help youth workers manage stress and improve their mental well-being. Activities including art, music and physical exercise can provide much-needed relief from work pressures and offer healthy outlets for stress.

Helping youth workers **develop a long-term perspective on their careers and personal development** can also enhance resilience. Encouraging them to set long-term goals and to see their work as part of a larger, meaningful journey can provide a sense of purpose and motivation, which is important for sustaining mental health over time.

Providing **emotional support** to youth workers is essential for maintaining their mental well-being and a sense of satisfaction in their work. Strategies for offering emotional support include:



Establishing peer support groups where youth workers can share their experiences and offer mutual support can create a safe space for discussing challenges and emotions. These groups can provide empathy, understanding and practical advice, helping youth workers to feel less isolated and more connected.



Providing **access to professional counselling** services for youth workers can offer them a confidential and supportive channel for discussing personal and work-related stressors. Counselling can help to develop coping strategies and resilience, thus contributing to youth workers' overall well-being.



Implementing mentorship programmes where experienced youth workers mentor newcomers can provide guidance, support and encouragement. Mentors can offer insights based on their experiences and help mentees to learn how to navigate challenges, in a supportive and nurturing environment.



Managers, supervisors and team leaders should conduct **regular check-ins** with team members to 'assess' and understand their emotional well-being and address any concerns. These check-ins should be informal and supportive, focusing on listening and providing support rather than evaluating performance.

EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS – INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

Responding to the question: What are the ways to enhance youth work practices, methodologies and youth workers' skills so they become more future-ready? What measures are needed?

Providing youth workers with access to high-quality information and resources is important, if not crucial. This includes mental health resources, best practice guides and educational materials that help them navigate the challenges they face in their work. Access to comprehensive information can empower youth workers to make informed decisions and adopt effective strategies for managing stress and promoting mental well-being.

Ongoing training and professional development opportunities are essential for building resilience. Workshops, seminars and courses focused on mental health, stress management and resilience-building techniques can equip youth workers with the skills they need to maintain their well-being. Such training should also include practical tools and strategies for self-care and coping with work-related stress.

Youth workers benefit from external support systems and structures. **Access to professional development opportunities** and training enhances their competencies and confidence. It is important to

create **pathways for career advancement and recognition** within the youth work sector. Engaging with external mentors and networks can provide new perspectives and resources, facilitating personal and professional growth.

Access to continuous training and professional development opportunities is vital. Workshops, seminars and courses on mental health, leadership and project management enhance competencies.

Building professional networks and mentorship programmes allows youth workers to connect with peers and experts. These networks provide valuable guidance, support and career advice, fostering personal and professional growth.

Simplifying access to funding and resources through less bureaucratic processes facilitates youth workers in focusing on their work, projects and other initiatives. Providing adequate financial support for infrastructure, training, programmes and project development is crucial.

Once again, making **access to external training programmes and workshops easier** can allow youth workers to acquire new competencies from experts outside their immediate environment. Partnerships with educational institutions and professional organisations can provide diverse learning opportunities.



INNER WORK – COLLECTIVE LEVEL

Responding to the question: **What deeper conversations do we need to have in the field of youth work? What do we need to rethink in terms of youth work's societal role, identity and patterns? What is still standing and what needs to be transformed?**

Fostering a **collective mindset** involves promoting a sense of shared purpose and collective identity among youth workers. Related strategies include:

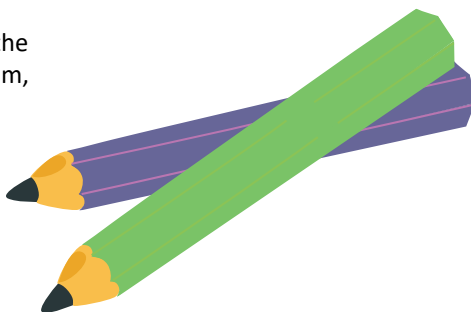
- ★ Developing and communicating a clear **shared vision, a common purpose** and a set of goals for the team can unite team members and support the alignment of their efforts. When everyone understands and is committed to the same goals and objectives, it creates a sense of purpose and direction. Regularly revisiting and reinforcing these goals helps maintain focus and motivation.

- ★ Encouraging **inclusive decision-making processes** in which all team members have a voice guarantees that diverse perspectives are considered. This approach not only raises a sense of ownership and empowerment but also serves the collective intelligence of the team, leading to stronger, sustainable innovative solutions.

- ★ Providing **training on cultural competencies and diversity** can help team members value, understand and respect different backgrounds and perspectives. Embracing diversity within the team enhances creativity and problem-solving abilities, contributing to a more inclusive and effective collective mindset.

- ★ Promoting **collaborative learning opportunities**, such as group training sessions, workshops and professional development courses, encourages ongoing development, continuous improvement and shared growth. When team members learn together, it nurtures a sense of community and mutual support.

- ★ As for the inner-individual level, **highlighting and celebrating collective achievements** rather than individual accomplishments reinforces the importance of teamwork and collaboration. Recognising the team's success as a whole contributes to a collective identity and reinforces the value of working together towards common goals.



Rethinking community engagement in a systemic way includes:

★ **Building strong community relationships** with community members, organisations and local authorities helps create a supportive network for youth work initiatives. Regular communication, collaborative projects and community events can strengthen these bonds and increase a sense of collective responsibility.

★ **Involving the community** in the planning and implementation of youth work programmes and projects ensures that initiatives are relevant and respond to local needs. **Participatory approaches** that include feedback from young people, parents and other stakeholders can improve the effectiveness and impact of these programmes and projects.

★ **Promoting public awareness and recognition** of the importance and impact of youth work is crucial to gaining broader support for the field. Public campaigns, media coverage and community presentations can highlight the achievements and contributions of youth work(ers), supporting a positive perception and greater community involvement.

★ **Creating flexible and accessible spaces for young people** within the community provides safe and supportive environments for them to engage, learn and grow. Hybrid spaces that combine physical and virtual elements can cater to diverse needs and preferences, ensuring

that all young people have access to the resources and support they need.

★ Implementing **collaborative community projects** that address community issues and involve multiple stakeholders can enhance community engagement. Projects that focus on social issues, environmental sustainability and cultural activities can bring together youth workers, young people and community members in meaningful ways.

Team building is crucial to creating a cohesive and collaborative environment among youth workers. Useful team-building strategies include:

★ Organising **regular team meetings and workshops** can support open communication, trust and collaboration. These gatherings provide a platform for team members to share their experiences and challenges and explore solutions collectively. Workshops focusing on team dynamics, problem-solving and project planning can enhance teamwork and cooperation.

★ Engaging in **team-building activities such as outdoor activities**, sports and interactive games can reinforce relationships among team members. Activities that require teamwork and collective problem-solving can build trust and improve the cohesion of the team. Retreats or team-building days can provide a break from routine work and help renew or revive the team spirit.



Encouraging **collaborative projects** in which team members work together towards a common goal can improve unity and collective effort. Assigning roles based on individual strengths and promoting joint responsibility ensures that everyone contributes and feels valued. Collaborative projects can also help in sharing competencies within the team.



Recognising and celebrating team achievements nurtures a sense of accomplishment and belonging. Celebrations can be formal, such as awards and ‘certificates’, or informal, such as team lunches or small celebrations for what has been achieved. Recognising collective efforts rather than individual contributions can strengthen the team’s unity and spirit.

EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS – COLLECTIVE LEVEL

Responding to the question: What are the structures, spaces and policy measures needed to create conditions for future-readiness of youth work? How European Youth Programmes need to become to support the evolution of youth work?

On a broader scale, there is a call for **policy changes and increased recognition of youth work** at national and European levels. This includes the development of flexible and accessible spaces for young people that are inclusive and empowering.

Establishing a **collective body of ethics and standards for youth work**, in addition to the newly established European body in 2024, can guarantee consistency and high-quality practices. This body would develop and enforce ethical guidelines, enhancing the professionalism and integrity of youth work.

Supporting **alliances among youth work(ers) associations**, such as the newly created Alliance of Youth Workers Associations (AYWA), can increase their voice and influence in policymaking. Collaborative efforts can lead to more coordinated and cohesive strategies for addressing the challenges faced by youth workers.

Increasing **funding for youth work at national and European levels** is essential for sustaining and expanding its impact. Policies should support the collection of data and research on youth work practices, thus providing insights for informed decision-making and effective resource allocation.

Developing and implementing flexible and innovative programmes that align with the needs of young people is crucial. Policies should support room for experiments alongside EU priorities, ensuring that youth work remains relevant and adaptive to changing needs. The European youth programmes should become more flexible and less bureaucratic, allowing for innovative and experimental approaches.

09

The Forums and the Futures

“We don’t have to invent the wheel because somebody somewhere has already been riding it for some time; that is why it is important for us to discuss these matters with each other and with people outside of our sector.”

Aleksandra Szymczyk and Özgehan Şenyuva

Each set of Forums consisted of presentations and workshops. Two of the Forums in each set consisted of two presentations each and the other two held a workshop each. Below are summaries of the in-

sights that participants gained in the Forums related to the future of youth work. Summaries of the different practices and workshops from the four sets of Forums can be found on the EAYW website.



RESPONDING TO MAJOR TRENDS

The participants shared their learning points related to these trends that they felt were important for the future of youth work.

★ Experiences of Evidence-based Youth Work Development

★ Insights to Digitalisation and Sustainability Aspects of Learning Mobilities

Participants felt that youth work is on the right path. It was felt that there needs to be a greater sharing of knowledge, ideas and values from one generation to next for development and sustainability. It was also acknowledged that youth workers are often the hindrance to digital youth work, with many youth workers lacking the knowledge and skills to work with the digital world.

★ Inspiring IT Curiosity in Girls

★ The Playfield of Mental Wellbeing

Youth work will become more and more the promoter and awareness raiser of mental well-being. There is a growing need for youth workers to have an understanding of the topic, to know the language and the issues that come with it, and to be working on developing methods on it and other related topics. Digital skills can be used to enhance a girl's or young woman's choices and reveal different and alternative paths in life. However, there is a lack of information on this topic currently in the sector.

★ Inclusive Digital Communication for Youth Information Services - Where to Begin?

It is very important to keep in mind how we communicate with young people, both the language and platforms we use. We need to develop inclusive (digital) communication and use it in a systematic and flexible way because some specific terms are offensive or excluding for some groups. To reach more young people we have to think outside of our bubble and go beyond what we know. It is important to reflect on and evaluate: Who is missing? Who am I excluding or not reaching? How to adapt communication strategies accordingly? What are the barriers young people are experiencing? Youth workers need to be prepared to learn from the young people.

★ VER - Youth Regenerative Employment Incubator

We need to be integrating the concept of head, heart and hands to this topic. It is necessary to be ready to adapt quickly to changes as they come fast, and there needs to be continuous support and financed programmes available, such as Erasmus+ Youth. In terms of the employment topic, young people need time and the opportunity to find out who they are, what their talents and interests are and in which context they can 'bloom'.



RETHINKING LEARNING: NEW PERSPECTIVES FOR IMPACTFUL CHANGE

At the end of this round of Forums, the participants were asked to respond to the question: “What areas of development does the youth sector need to be focusing on for impactful change?”

★ Youth Workers and Trainers Modular Trainings and Certification Aligned to ETS Strategy and Competence Models

★ Transforming Youth Work: A Breakthrough in Quality and Tech!

Recognised accreditation/credentials for youth workers will support impactful change. There is also a need for harmonised quality frameworks as well as tools for assessment and recognition. A third aspect is having access to asynchronous learning that adjusts to different learner needs and diverse abilities.

The digital is already having an impact but more can be done. There is a need for quality criteria in the tech and digital learning world, something that needs to be developed. However, any system needs to remain adaptable to national and local circumstances and situations. There also needs to be a push in the sector for transforming non-formal methodologies, tools, and activities into digital ones.

★ The “Politics” of Evidence: Knowledge to Action with the Youth Research & Evaluation eXchange (YouthREX)

★ The Power of Networking and Broad Policy Influence around Play

We need to be developing good youth work monitoring and evaluation systems that are tailored to the needs and capacities of the specific youth workers or youth work teams. Having interdisciplinary and intersectional connections will greatly enhance youth work.

★ Pulse of the City: Social Space Analysis Focusing on Adolescents in Urban Areas to Facilitate Systemic Change

Social space analysis is impactful and for the future of youth work it needs to be happening more broadly. Taking a holistic approach is key, incorporating active communication between any and all services supporting and impacting young people, from traditional educational facilities, to urban planning, to youth services. The youth sector needs to be active in advocating for young people’s involvement in the development of urban spaces and in services intended for young people.

★ Humour is Serious Business - The Power of Humour to Transform

Including humour in learning is a great way to learn. Those who attended the workshop felt that youth workers need to use more humour in their work in order to make more impactful change. Humour can be used to break the ice, create an

open space for young people to speak about different social challenges/differences, and it can help the youth worker in understanding a young person's needs and issues. Humour can also be used to address serious and heavy topics in youth work. It is also good for wellbeing – for young people and youth workers.

RETHINKING SPACES OF PARTICIPATION

In this round the participants were responding to “What inspiration for rethinking youth work do you take from the practices you just explored?”



Quality Label for Badge Recognition



National Quality Label for Youth Centres

Youth work should define its own quality criteria to improve its outcomes, this needs to be combined with regular development checks. Having a clear recognition framework at both national and European levels will also support quality. We need to standardise the theoretical anchor points of youth work and create a shared language to help with achieving a shared vision of quality, leading to effective projects and better daily activities. Capacity to build alliances with other stakeholders is crucial for boosting recognition processes.

The concept of quality labels needs to be supportive, not just a checklist, and it needs to work for each individual organisation. The quality label should help organisations assess and improve their ac-

tivities, and their active involvement with young people. The quality labels can aid local lobbying efforts and inspire ideas for improving youth centres.



Vijećko - Board Game about Youth Organising



Shift Digital and Cultural Youth House

Creativity supports learning, and gamification is an excellent tool for this. Change brings mixed feelings, but we need to embrace adaptation, be flexible, uphold key values, and involve young people in all the processes.



Climate Creatorship

Connections matter! People are the most important resource. We must invest in ourselves and take care of ourselves, connecting with each other, with our environment, and with our communities. This is pivotal in facing the future issues explored across the EAYW.



Where Does Youth Motivation Come from and Where Does it Disappear?

Motivation will continue to be important, both for young people and for youth workers. However, youth work needs to find new solutions to strengthen young people's motivation. It is important for youth workers to be in touch with their own motivation, where it is coming from and what pushes the youth worker to do better. Youth workers also need to take responsibility in motivating each other.

Youth work needs to boost motivation among young people in a more conscious

and guided way, so they can find their purpose in life more easily. The more is done on this, the more resilient the young people will become. A part of the motivation is based in identifying the real needs of the young people and knowing the right questions to ask.

LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE

The participants were asked “What did you take from this round that is a key factor for the future of youth work?”

★ Immersive Audio Unlearning - A Radical Education Methodology

★ Yurish

We can use social media for storytelling, youth workers need to be active in this. Storytelling can deepen our understanding of the world. Storytelling connects people. It is a way to invite people to really think about the world and support young people to become more self-determined.

★ Springboard to the Event Industry - An Innovative Approach to Promote Youth Employment

★ The Melting Pot

Something that has been said for many years is that a cross-sectoral approach is very valuable and can create real sustainable impact, especially for the young people we work with. Mainstreaming youth work practices and principles across different sectors and institutions would have a huge impact. Collaboration with cultur-

al organisations and institutions makes them more accessible to young people. We need to be supporting festivals that are designed and led by young people.

★ Re-envisioning the Future Together

While the future is unknown, we can explore different possible futures, because we can do things that affect the future. Including youth participation in local and national politics has implications for the future, but not just including young people physically, really listening to their ideas and proposals. If we change one element, this has consequences to the whole system. This can be for good or bad, so we need to be aware of that. Youth workers need to be prepared and skilled in order to help young people to think about the future, planning and dreaming about what they need and want.

★ System Thinking and Future of Youth Work through Lego Serious Play

It is so important to change perspectives when we look at the same thing.



10

The Students' Research

"As individuals and as a community we need to decide if any of these scenarios threaten, challenge, put in danger, or erode our youth work values, or if are they going to strengthen them. It is then up to us to react or not."

Aleksandra Szymczyk and Özgehan Şenyuva

One of the innovative aspects of this 3rd EAYW, was the inclusion of five universities that teach youth or social work or related studies into the programme of the event:

- IU International University, Germany
- Maynooth University Department of Applied Social Science, Ireland
- UCLL Social Work, Belgium
- Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore Milano / Education and Training Sciences
- University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Department of Educational Sciences

The universities selected a total of 20 students to take part in the EAYW. As well as fully participating in the event, the students with the support of their teaching staff, engaged in a 48-hour research project, which focused on two main questions:

- What do experts and practitioners on the EAYW think about the future of youth work?
- What do participants think about good ways to prepare students for their work in youth work?

In total, the group of students conducted 20 interviews, produced 80 pages of interview transcript and ten pages of summary.



What do experts and practioners on the EAYW think about the future of youth work?

What do participants think about good ways to prepare students for their work in youth work?

Five of the students - Sanja Milojević (Slovenia), Brian O'Neill and Billie Morgan (Ireland), Julia Sidorow (Germany) and Stan Toebat (Belgium) - presented five core outcomes of the group's research.

Voicing the young people

The voice of young people must be heard! To achieve that, youth workers need to be educated in soft/relational skills. In order for youth workers to be effective, to make changes in the lives of young people, and to empower them to make changes for themselves, the youth workers need to form meaningful connections with them. This involves listening to them and including them. Through this process the youth workers become aware of the young people's realities and are able to meet their needs.

Going for an eclectic approach

Youth work is extremely broad and touches a lot of fields like sociology, anthropology, political science, social and cultural work etc. As a result, youth workers need interdisciplinary knowledge as well as critical thinking skills. The education of youth workers should also include soft skills that are needed to get interdisciplinary knowledge.

The education and training of youth workers provides a large amount of theory which creates the backbone of youth work. However, just theory does not make a youth worker, it is vitally important to get a good balance between the theory at school and being able to put it into practice.

Creating standards in professionalisation

Many people responded that the recognition of youth work is necessary and that there is a need for a standardised quality framework for youth work. The European community of practice connecting with each other and learning from each at events such as the EAYW is an important way to achieve this.

Thinking about selfcare

Another key finding is related to boundaries and self-care in youth work and how the education of youth workers needs to include aspects of self-care to help prevent burnout. Youth work can be a very intense job, especially when dealing with young people that have many complex needs.

In terms of boundaries, there are two aspects of this. The first is about personal

boundaries: It is important that youth workers develop boundaries related to their work, this not only supports them, it also means they are a role model to the young people who need to be encouraged to create their own boundaries. The second is professional boundaries: It is important to keep in mind the boundaries between youth work and the other professions who work with young people. It can be hard to admit that we might not be the best person to help a young person and to link them in with other professions.

Lifelong learning through international cooperation

Lifelong learning is essential in youth work education because of the fast changes in young people's lives. One of the ways this can be achieved is through taking part in international activities such as the EAYW.



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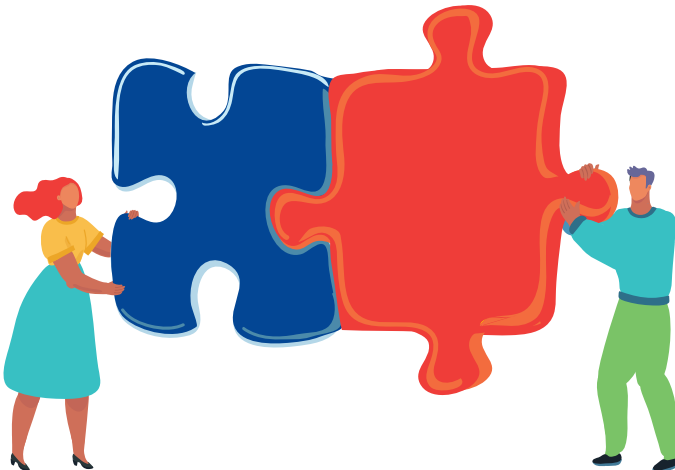
The Closing of the EAYW

“One of the things about the future is that it is often a new version of the past. Hopefully, new and improved. Sadly, sometimes a second-rate copy. But let’s try and make our futures something better.”

Nik Paddison

PARTICIPANTS’ REFLECTIONS

For the closing of the EAYW, six participants were asked to respond to a specific question in the final plenary. The intention was to give a voice to participants at the end of the conference where they could share some of their insights and learning from the conference.



What are the blocks in youth work that we need to overcome to become more future ready?

“I want to stress that we need to think positively about the future. It felt sometimes during the conference that we were struggling a little bit with this because there are so many negative trends to face, but we can’t let these trends dictate how we see the whole.” Geert Boutsen

What kind of culture does the youth sector need to develop to be future ready?

“In terms of a youth work culture, we need to think, where is our focus? To please the state and meet official funding criteria, or to work really with the young people?” Ana Pecarski

What aspects of youth work do you think will stay?

“Sam Altman, the CEO of OpenAI, was asked what kind of jobs in the next 5 years will be needed because of AI. He was surprised because people normally ask what jobs won’t exist in the future because of AI. He replied that it is the jobs that require human connection, that provide fantastic experiences, these are the jobs that will be needed. So I was thinking, that sounds like a youth worker, that sounds like what we do. The centrality of youth work is the relationship, and this forms part of the fantastic experiences that we provide and that resonates with people. This will stay.” Uzo Anucha

What for you is the key thing you need to be discussing with colleagues back home?

“For my work at the international level with Jeunesse Musicale, we are already

engaged in discussing the futures of culture and music, but this is the first time that we have the opportunity to discuss the futures of youth work. So I would really like to bridge all these different worlds and contribute to this broader discussion with them.” Giulia Annibaletti

What need to be the next steps after the EAYW?

“I would like to make a few calls for action. Firstly, we need to take this future-oriented mindset wherever we go. Secondly, we need to be discussing more as a sector the futures, because the future of youth work needs collectiveness. Thirdly, when we get home and meet the young people we work with, we need to be giving them confidence about their future. If young people have that confidence, then together with youth workers, they can move mountains.” Rilke Mahieu



REFLECTIONS FROM THE EAYW TEAM

Various members of the EAYW organising and facilitating team were involved in the closing of the EAYW. Following are some of the points raised, reflections made, and questions asked at the end of three intense days of learning and futures exploration.

Future past present and future

We have been challenged to reflect on whether we are ready for the future or for preparing for the future. Is our mindset in the right place, are we ready to challenge ourselves to rethink the role of youth work? What new things are we ready to take on, what traditional things might we have to let go of? How are we going to do that? What developments in the training and education of youth workers, current youth workers, and future youth workers do we need?

When is the future?

When does the future start? Is it now, is it tomorrow, last week, next week? In answer, there was a quote that came from one of the participants, “the only place where change is happening is in the present, so make sure to be there”.

New ways of looking

It is very important to have this new way of looking at things, new questions, new ideas, new perspectives. We need more people who will think like this, who are able to connect the different worlds.

A next step

Am I more pessimistic? Am I more optimistic? Am I more hopeful? What do I

do about this whole future thing? Should we just get inside a cave and wait for it to pass, or do we do something? There is a slogan that was adopted by the EAYW, “what happens in the Academy should not stay in the Academy”. While recognising that many aspects of the future may seem overwhelming, there was also a strong desire to take action and at the very least, everyone was encouraged to share what they heard and what they discussed, with both their colleagues and their organisations.

The role of the EAYW

The role of the EAYW in 2024 has been to try and put this future oriented mindset onto the youth work agenda and get the sector to be more conscious of it. In this it has succeeded. The EAYW Advisory Board and Steering Group meet in autumn 2024 to discuss and decide how to take this project further in the coming period until 2027.



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Concluding Reflections

“The end is just the beginning”.

TS Eliot



While the key elements of the EAYW were related to exploring the concept of futures work and the futures of youth work research, it is also true to say that the participants and contributors had a huge amount to say on the topics. Their feedback and analysis are grounded in their work as youth workers, policy makers, managers, students, professors, trainers, institutional representatives and so on. This final chapter is based on inputs, comments, workshops, and discussions of all the people who attended the 3rd edition of the EAYW.

Recognition

One of the aspects of futures work is that by knowing the possible futures, more favourable futures can be worked towards. The recognition of youth work has an important role in just about every possible future scenario. Therefore, promoting the importance of youth work and its impact to the public through public campaigns, media coverage, and community presentations that highlight achievements, is key for the futures of youth work.

Support

One of the issues that was talked about a lot throughout the EAYW was the need for support for youth workers, indeed, not just youth workers but for everyone working in the youth sector. In order to meet the challenges ahead, in order to keep being open to future foresight work, there needs to be support. The participants, contributors and speakers divided this topic into several areas. Self-support, support systems and mutual support.

Self-support

Participants felt that self-care and self-support are also needed in terms of the futures. Self-reflection was highlighted as a means of identifying not only strengths but also the stressors and difficulties being faced. With this knowledge, youth workers can not only improve their current situation but can develop strategies for coping for the futures. The students, through their research, identified that self-care and self-support should be included in the education of youth workers in order to help prevent burnout. It is

also useful in supporting youth workers to identify and maintain boundaries - work and personal.

Support systems

There is a need for strong support systems for youth workers, collaborative platforms where they can share experiences, seek advice, and offer support to one another. The Alliance of Youth Workers Associations and the International Youth Work Trainers Guild are two examples. With strong support there is more opportunity for being able to develop coordinated and cohesive strategies for addressing future challenges faced by youth workers.

Mutual support

As youth work develops and changes to meet the ever-evolving needs of young people, the sector needs to develop a collective mindset that has a shared purpose and a stronger collective identity. Creating a sense of ownership strengthens the sector. This encourages ongoing development, continuous improvement, shared growth and preparation for the futures of youth work.





Professional development

There is a need to develop long-term perspectives on youth work careers with pathways for career advancement and recognition. There needs to be more access to professional development opportunities and greater access to high-quality information and resources. There need to be stronger partnerships with universities and with youth work students having a place at the major European events.

One of the forums was about a project that is working on accreditation credentials for youth workers, highlighting the need for harmonised quality frameworks as well as tools for assessment and recognition. The students identified lifelong learning as essential in youth work education because of the fast changes of young people's lives.

Youth work and the wider community

The sector needs to be connecting with society and harmonising with the changes happening in society. Many youth organisations already have strong community relations with community members, organisations, and local authorities; this is

important for both the present work and for the futures.

The forums reflected this strongly, sharing different practices that are happening around Europe and are supporting the future developments of youth work. Four of the Forums shared how they are connecting youth work with the wider community. This is through analysing social spaces and adolescents, connecting youth work with climate and environmental organisations, and mainstreaming youth work practices and principles into cultural organisations and institutions, making them more accessible to young people.

Policy

Even if there are multiple possible futures to consider, it is still important to explore policy development towards young people and youth work. One of the Forums shared that youth participation in local and national politics has implications for the future. Others were focused on how youth work needs to be influencing policy development as much as policy development influences youth work. Being futures aware can provide as yet unthought

of insights for informing decision-making and effective resource allocation.

Standards

Another need the students identified through their research was for a standardised quality framework for youth work. Establishing collective ethics and standards for youth work can guarantee consistency and high-quality practice. This was also echoed in the Forums through two quality label projects. In these examples, the concept of such frameworks was seen to be necessary for ongoing youth work development.

Digitisation

Much like the Futures of Youth Work research, a common cross-cutting theme that came from the voices of the people was technology. In discussions, in the Forums and from the students' research, it is in many of the conversations and points being made. Examples included youth workers themselves being the greatest hindrance to developments and innovative projects promoting the IT world to girls and young women. In total, there were four Forums that were working with or promoting technology and the digital world.

Funding and resources

One area that received a lot of support in terms of both the here and now and for the futures of youth work was for the simplifying of access to funding and resources through less bureaucratic processes. Many people also recognised that there needs to be an increase in funding for youth work at national and European levels - both for sustaining and expanding its impact.

EU Youth Programmes

In the light of the faster and faster changes taking place in societies everywhere, the European youth programmes need to become more flexible and less bureaucratic, allowing for innovative and experimental approaches. Developing and implementing flexible and innovative programmes that align with the needs of young people is crucial.



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The Annexes



Annex 1:

Programme Overview

3rd European Academy on Youth Work Event
Kranjska Gora, Slovenia - 14 – 17 May 2024

	Tue, 14 May	Wednesday, 15 May	Thursday, 16 May	Friday, 17 May
8:00 -8:30	Arrivals	Optional morning wellbeing activities		
9:30		Academy Opening Keynote Adanna Shallowe (RSA, U.K.): Creating New Futures Live Streaming	Parallel Practice and Reflection Forums Round 3 Looking at Innovative Practices for a Future-ready Youth Work: Rethinking “spaces” of participation	Parallel Practice and Reflection Forums Round 4 Looking at Innovative Practices for a Future-ready Youth Work: Looking towards the future
11:00		Coffee break		
11:30		Parallel Practice and Reflection Forums Round 1 Looking at Innovative Practices for a Future-ready Youth Work: Responding to major trends	Plenary Session Presentation of the EAYW research: Futures of Youth Work - Potential Future Scenarios Live Streaming	Academy Closing Session How to Move Youth Work Forward
13:00		Lunch break		
14:30	Optional activities to: Meet other participants, Discover the environment, Get into the Academy mind-set	Parallel Practice and Reflection Forums Round 2 Looking at Innovative Practices for a Future-ready Youth Work: Rethinking learning – New perspectives for impactful change	Plenary Session How can we Act, Plan and Envision for a Future We Don't Know	Departures
16:00	Coffee break			
16:30	Academy Opening Session Getting Ready for Future Thinking	Reflection Walk & Talk	Reflection Walk & Talk	
18:00		Futures Lounge	Futures Lounge	
19:00	Dinner			
21:00	Welcome Cocktail	Networking Market Place	Celebration and Party	

15.05, 11.30 - 13.00 - 1st Round of Practice and Reflection Forums

Responding to major trends

1	Ulrike Werner	The use of digital media in international youth work – Results of the scientific monitoring of the project "IYW.digital - International Youth Work.digital"	Presentations and discussion
	Marzena Ples	How to be more sustainable in learning mobility projects? Framework for sustainability in learning mobility	
2	Laura Grineviciute	Empower Girls Creativity Through Use of Digital Technologies (SparkDigiGirls) project	Presentations and discussion
	Aagje Rottiers	PLayfield mental well-being	
3	Karolina Kosowska	Inclusive Digital Communication for Youth Information Services - where to begin?	Workshop
4	Filipe Alves	VER - Youth regenerative employment incubator	Workshop

15.05, 14.30 - 16.00 - 2nd Round of Practice and Reflection Forums

Rethinking Learning: New Perspectives for Impactful Change

1	Laimonas Ragauskas	Competencies Training	Presentations and discussion
	Ivona Šimunović	Transforming Youth Work: A Breakthrough in Quality and Tech!	
2	Uzo Anucha	The "Politics" of Evidence: Knowledge to Action with the Youth Research & Evaluation eXchange (YouthREX)	Presentations and discussion
	Tine Bergiers	The power of networking and broad policy influence around play	
3	Martin Husa	Pulse of the City: Social Space Analysis focusing on adolescents in urban areas to facilitate systemic change.	Workshop
4	Fergal Barr	Humour is Serious Business - The Power of Humour to Transform	Workshop

16.05, 9.30 - 11.00 - 3rd Round of Practice and Reflection Forums

Rethinking "spaces" of participation

1	Urška Česnik	Quality Label for Badge Recognition	Presentations and discussion
	Dragan Atanasov	National Quality Label for Youth Centres	
2	Harika Kalman	Shift	Presentations and discussion
	Berina Bulatovic	Viječko - board game about youth organizing	
3	Vid Tratnik	Climate Creatorship	Workshop
4	Vladas Polevičius, Aistė Rutkauskienė	Where does youth motivation come from and where does it disappear?	Workshop

17.05, 9.30 - 11.00 - 4th Round of Practice and Reflection Forums

Looking towards the future

1	Andreja Korsic	Yurish	Presentations and discussion
	Sérgio Xavier	Immersive Audio-Unlearning - Democracy? / Radical education	
2	Tiina Toivola and Eveliina Inkinen	Springboard to the Event Industry - an innovative approach to promote youth employment	Presentations and discussion
	Nedeljka Ivosevic	The Melting Pot	
3	Mirko Migliarino	Re-envisioning the Future Together	Workshop
4	Maja Drobne	System thinking through Lego serious play	Workshop



Annex 2:

Links to other Resources from the EAYW Event:

1. Forum descriptions

The [Forums](#) represented presentations and discussions, or workshops of a diversity of practices from the field youth work. They were selected by a team of evaluators based on a public call, in view of their innovative potential and relevance for the EAYW event.

2. Window to the Future

The game was played in the plenary setting during the opening session involving all 200 participants. Participants were divided into groups of five with the game already set up for them along with the written instructions.

The tool is a board game, which was created by Anita Silva for the EAYW. It was developed as a way to explore the futures of youth work. It is designed as a reflection tool to encourage interesting and balanced conversations around what the future might hold for our communities and what we can do to co-create a better future. It can be used with groups when you want to practise future-thinking skills, such as imagination, empathy, critical thinking and strategic thinking.

More information about Window to the Future, and a printable version of the game for download can be found on the [EAYW website](#).

3. Key note presentations

Links to the presentation slides and videos of all key note presentations are available on the [page of the third EAYW](#) on the EAYW website.

Key note speeches:

- [Creating New Futures](#)
Adanna Shallowe, International Affairs Analyst, Network Weaver, Facilitator
Video
Presentation slides
- [Futures of Youth Work: Research Outcomes](#)
Aleksandra Szymczyk, Manchester Metropolitan University | UK and Özgehan Şenyuva, RAY Network - Research-based Analysis of European Youth programmes
Video
Presentation slides
- [Strategies for Getting Future-ready](#)
Gisele Evrard: Trainer, Coach, Facilitator
Video
Presentation slides

Students' presentation slides

EAYW Event Team



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Forum facilitators: Barnabas Gulyas, Simona Muršec, Konstantinos Spatiotis, Ira Topalli

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Many thanks to everyone who contributed to this edition of the EAYW – the EAYW team as well as all participants, contributors and speakers. Special thanks to the members of the EAYW Steering Group and Advisory Board for their guidance and support.



MOVIT has been the Slovenian National Agency for EU programmes in the field of youth, currently Erasmus+, youth field, and the European Solidarity Corps, since May 1999. In this role, MOVIT manages indirectly centralised EU budget funds and supports different forms of learning mobility activities in youth work. It also runs activities to promote the development of (European) youth work, solidarity, and non-formal education. MOVIT also serves as an office of Eurodesk (www.eurodesk.si) and the SALTO South East Europe Resource Centre (SALTO SEE). SALTO SEE belongs to the network of SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres (www.salto-youth.net).

Since 2018, MOVIT has been coordinating the European Academy on Youth Work partnership, which in 2024 includes the Youth National Agencies of Austria, Belgium-FL, Croatia, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia and Sweden and SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres.





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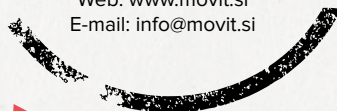
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