

Common grounds and intentions for InterCity Youth

THE EUROPEAN NETWORK of LOCAL DEPARTMENTS for YOUTH WORK

Background

Youth work is governed, organized, administered and carried out in many different ways through out Europe. Regardless of these differences local municipalities have both an interest in and responsibility for the living conditions of young people and hence for their possibilities to take part in youth work activities.

At the same time youth work still struggles to have a clear identity and position in relation to other areas within the field of youth policy. In order to accomplish this the aims, possible outcomes and quality of youth work have to be clarified and made visible in a much more systematic and reliable way than before. This in turn asks for both structured discussions and the development of tools for making visible and enhancing youth work quality.

If this clarification should result in profound change one, or if not the most, important actors are local departments responsible for youth work. These often have updated knowledge on youth through both daily face-to-face contacts and through local research, statistics and indicators. And most of all; it is here, on local level, discussions must be held, new tools be adopted and change implemented.

As there are more than 100 000 cities in Europe, there is a huge scope for peer learning and development. The challenge is to organize peer learning on a systematic basis and to make the results transparent to European cities and policymaking. The network intends to take on this challenge.

The aim of the network

The overall aim of the network is to enhance the quality of youth work¹ in the EU membership states.

In order to achieve the above stated aim the networks objectives are to:

1. **enhance peer learning between local departments of youth work;** providing directors and staff opportunities to professional development, mutual support and stimulation.
2. **promote the exchange and development of tools for enhancing and making visible the importance and quality of youth work.**
3. **promote youth work as an arena for non formal learning.**
4. **promote the exchange and development of new approaches, methods and practices in youth work.**
5. **contribute to European youth policies;** transmitting knowledge and insight from local government experiments and solutions to European policy agendas.

The Network is dedicated to co-operate with other organizations and networks engaged with young people in order to enhance the over all living conditions of young people.

Membership

Membership is open to:

- European² municipality departments³ responsible⁴ for youth work
- Networks⁵ of such departments

As member the organizations must:

- Stand behind this document.
- Pay the annual registration fee.

The annual registration fee for members is 500 euro.

Organization

The Network is an independent, non-profit, non-political organization. As a network it should be as flexible, non-bureaucratic and actions oriented as possible.

- All major decisions are to be taken by the board, which is to meet at least two times a year and where each member has one seat.
- The head of the member department should be the one representing the member in the board.
- The Board is responsible for ensuring that the Network acts in accordance with the common grounds and intentions.
- Presence at the board meetings should be at the member department's own expense and no compensation should be paid.
- The Board shall elect a Chair, a Vice Chair and a Treasurer, from amongst their number, for a period of two years. These will also function as an executive committee between the board meetings.
- The Board can delegate regular operational decision-making responsibility to the executive committee (to include financial matters, strategy, conferences, risk review and/or other operational matters).
- Coordination, administration, planning and other work tasks that are necessary in order to make the network function and to carry out decisions made by the board or the executive committee could be paid for and carried out by board members and/or hired staff.
- If a more steady office should be needed, an executive officer able to represent the network should be assigned by the executive committee after a board decision.
- The executive committee is to function as employer in relation to hired staff.
- The board shall at its first ordinary meeting discuss and decide upon the need for more formalized statutes.
- Departments or networks that no longer wish to be a member of the Network shall inform the Chair of the Board accordingly.

Activities of the network

All major activities are to be decided by the board.

The main aim of these activities should be to provide the members with possibilities to structured peer learning on relevant questions. This might be done through thematic working groups, seminars, web sites, databases, conferences or any other way the board find fit.

Financial Year

The financial year of the Network is the calendar year

Establishment

The European Network of Local Departments for Youth Work was established on its first statutory meeting 09.11.2014

The legal seat of the network is Gothenburg, Sweden.

¹ Youth work is here understood as: Actions concerning young people (individuals, groups, organizations, movements) on their free time, aiming at and designed for supporting their personal and social development through voluntary participation and non formal learning.

This working definition builds on the EU council resolution on youth work adopted in 2010 and is independent of which body or organization that is founding, governing, organizing or delivering the actual activity and also independent of in what setting and circumstances it is taking place.

² By Europe is understood Council of Europe member countries.

³ Since municipalities and their administrations are differently structured and organized through out Europe and that, due to this fact, youth work have both different names and placing's within these structures and could be more or less integrated in units that handles also other issues the term "municipality departments" should not be taken too literary. Membership in the network is open to any kind of unit within a municipality that handles youth work, regardless of its name or formal position in the municipality concerned.

Having departments as members also means that the membership is not personal.

⁴ "Responsible" is here defined as having to answer to a political level on questions regarding youth work. I.e. The department can carry out youth work by itself and/or support youth work carried out by NGO's or groups of young people.

⁵ "Networks" is here understood as a group of departments from different cities/municipalities with a formal agreement on cooperation around youth work issues. I.e. it must have some kind of common statement/statutes but does not have to be a legal body.