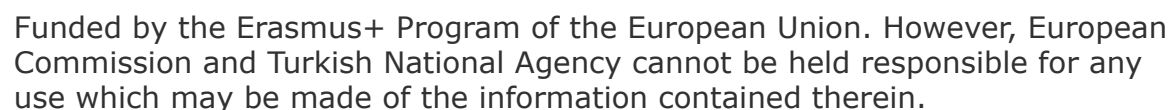




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# Introduction

01

## 1.1 Aims and objectives

The aim of this comparative report is firstly to gain an insight into the current situation of youth work with young people from disadvantaged background in several European countries and secondly to identify structural and other difficulties and challenges faced by youth workers in the respective partner countries: **Italy, Spain, Turkey, Austria and Germany**, in order to also derive proposals for further training needs. The present report provides general and comparative data on the situation of disadvantaged young people and youth social work in the countries, as well as examples of tools and good practice in this field. It thus summarises the most important findings from the five partner countries of the project. Moreover, this collective report is to embed the results of the first project phase (IO1) into a wider theoretical context. As the current project is a comparative cross-border project it is obvious to consider the findings of the national investigations in a broader transnational framework. In this way, the opportunities and challenges of social work in the context of a globalised society should become clearer.

## 1.2 Methodology

This overall report is predominantly based on the findings of the national reports from the five partner countries (Italy, Spain, Turkey, Austria and Germany). It roughly corresponds to their structure. The main results are summarised, compared and placed in a theoretical framework. It consists of two main components: A theoretical part - the comparative results of a literature study (data, document and archive research) in the partner countries and an empirical part - the results of the expert surveys, i.e. interviews, questionnaires and discussions with focus groups including youth and social workers.

This collective report provides useful insights into the conditions and daily practices of youth work in each country and derives some recommendations on current approaches and further training needs. The findings from each country are put into relation to each other, partly also graphically visualized. Conclusions and recommendations are derived, which



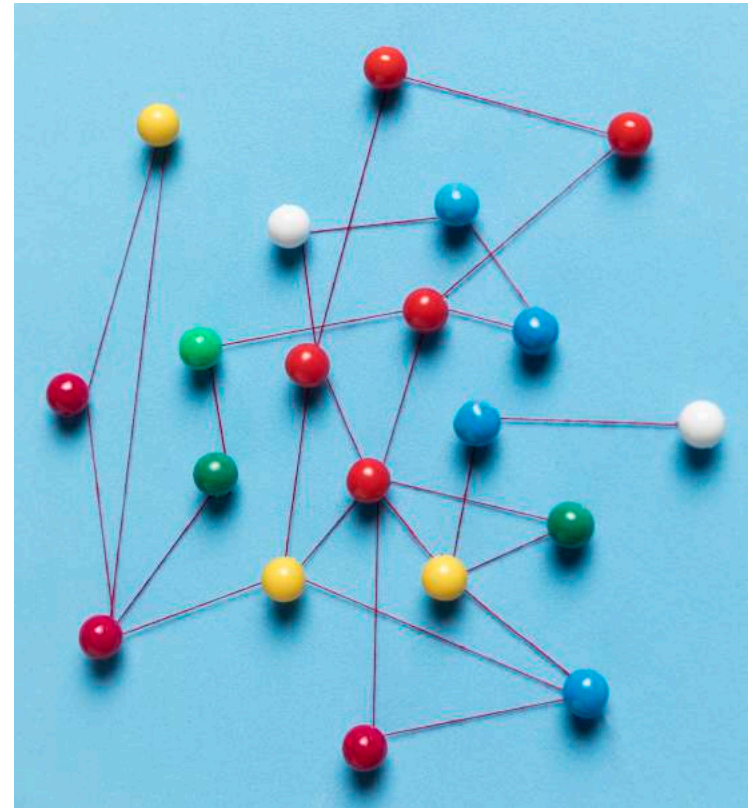
will be considered and further elaborated in the further course of the project.

A note on the comparability of the results from the national reports seems appropriate here: Youth social work is a very complex, context-dependent field. So the results of the country reports are comparable to a limited extent. Their findings from desk studies and results from the focus groups may differ regarding their key issues and comprehensiveness. This means, a specific topic may be described in great detail in one report, but only be touched upon by another. This does not necessarily mean that respective issue would not play a role at all, it simply means that the focus or perspectives may differ.

### 1.3 Youth and youth work in a globalized society

Where are young people located at a time when both opportunities and crises of globalization are manifesting themselves in their everyday lives? Questions of justice do not stop at national borders.

New environmental and climate movements, criticism of globalization and refugee aid are transnational movements that are largely initiated and supported by young people. Own experiences of migration and diversity, transnational connections and mobility, which play an important role especially for young people, but also forms of restriction or exclusion experienced in family or circle of friends contribute to a kind of "translocal/transnational consciousness". This also raises the question of discrimination. What does "disadvantaged background" mean in this context? Which target groups are involved? And how can youth social work tackle problems of discrimination and marginalisation?



Social change can be seen in the mirror of non-school child and youth work, which deals both theoretically and practically with transitions in living environments and their consequences. These include changes in family forms, in the educational system, the integration of immigrant population groups, the marginalisation and impoverishment of social groups and the far-reaching changes in the labour market. Children and adolescents are intensively challenged in their lives as they grow up to cope with these changes. At the same time, they are seismographs of this social change and help to shape it through their needs and demands. Extracurricular child and youth work takes up these diverse and often contradictory experiences and passes them on to other social actors and institutions in order to enable them to gain a better understanding of the living environments of children and young people.<sup>1</sup>

## 1.4 Disadvantage, participation and inclusion

What does **disadvantaged background** mean in the national context of the project partners? Who are **young people with fewer opportunities**? Not in all countries this term is explicitly at the forefront of official youth policy or youth work. Here again, there is no uniform view. The concepts vary both within individual nations and from country to country, as will be seen later. Young people can be structurally or individually disadvantaged, i.e. having fewer opportunities either because of their life situation or because of personal characteristics. The following EU-based description of the **main reasons for disadvantage** (as also used or hinted at in the German, Italian and Turkish national reports), highlights the complex situations from which inequality can arise. This also applies, in varying degrees, to all partner countries.

**Obstacles** preventing young people from participating in employment, formal and non-formal education, transnational mobility, democratic processes and society in general may be:

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. : Bundesministerium für Familie und Jugend (BMFJ) (2015), p. 6.( Federal Ministry for Family and Youth (BMFJ): Non-school child and youth work in Austria).



- **Economic obstacles:** young people with a low standard of living, low income, dependence on social welfare system, young people in long-term unemployment or poverty, young people who are homeless, in debt or with financial problems etc.
- **Social obstacles:** young people facing discrimination because of gender, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, disability, etc., young people with limited social skills or anti-social or high-risk behaviours, young people in a precarious situation, (ex-)offenders, (ex-)drug or alcohol abusers, young and/or single parents, orphans etc.
- **Educational difficulties:** young people with learning difficulties, early school leavers, lower qualified persons, young people with poor school performance etc.
- **Cultural differences:** immigrants, refugees or descendants from immigrant or refugee families, young people belonging to a national or ethnic minority, young people with linguistic adaptation and cultural inclusion difficulties etc.
- **Geographical obstacles:** young people from remote or rural areas, young people living on small islands or in peripheral regions, young people from urban problem zones, young people from less serviced areas (limited public transport, poor facilities) etc.
- **Disability (i.e. participants with special needs):** young people with mental (intellectual, cognitive, learning), physical, sensory or other disabilities etc.
- **Health problems:** young people with chronic health problems, severe illnesses or psychiatric conditions etc.



This definition deliberately focuses on the **social situation** of young people in order to avoid stigmatisation and blame. However, the list is not exhaustive, but gives an indication of the kind of possible structures of exclusion. Some target groups, such as in particular young people who are not in employment, education or training (**NEETs**), face more than one of the situations listed above at the same time. The causes of disadvantage can be as manifold as the solutions. It is therefore important to have a **comparative view**, because being in one of the above mentioned situations does not automatically lead to fewer opportunities compared to peers (not all people from minorities face discrimination, a person with a disability is not necessarily disadvantaged if the environment is adapted, etc.). The risk of exclusion due to specific factors and obstacles varies according to country and context, so that an **intersectional view** of transitions and overlaps between **different groups** with **disadvantaged background** appears useful.

# Comparative Literature and Document Review

02

What is the respective national situation? In which political, legal and social conditions is youth social work embedded? What developments can be observed, what problems and challenges do young people and social workers face? What good practices can inspire? Where do similarities and differences appear? And what may be consequences and further suggestions?

A comparison of the situation in the partner countries first of all reveals that "youth work" or "youth social work" is by no means based on a commonly shared understanding. Even concepts of "youth" in general or of "disadvantaged background" can differ – and so they do in social sciences - be it in terms of age range or other social and political considerations. As stated in a study conducted between 1997 and 2001, each European country conceptualizes youth differently. For example, in terms of age range, youth are 13-19 years old in the UK, 0-25 years old in the Netherlands (they simply do not draw a distinction between child and youth), 7-26 years old in Estonia, 14-30 years old in Spain and so on.<sup>2</sup> And in some Arab states such as Egypt and Jordan the youth age group even goes as high as 35.<sup>3</sup>

We can at least assume that youth per se does not exist, that it is rather a historically and socially dynamic concept – which is by no means a new insight.

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<sup>2</sup> Williamson 2002, p. 31.

<sup>3</sup> Denstadt/ Badre et al 2016, p. 78, fn 35.

## 2.1 Specific Framework and Conditions of Youth Work

The history of youth work in [Italy](#) is primarily the history of association-based youth education outside schooling. Today this is mainly located within what is best described as the growing Third (or Voluntary) Sector. But there is not a clear definition of youth work, nor of “young people”. So far, there are no national laws regarding both youth work and young persons. All the laws dealing with this issue, both at national and regional level, have different concepts of what “young people” are. In fact, each of these laws considers different age ranges to identify the target, depending on the issue dealt with.

[Italian youth policies](#) have been oriented towards [two main directions](#): on one side, they have dealt with young people involved in the [labour market](#) and, on the other one, they were oriented [towards prevention of crime, delinquency and drug abuse](#). Since 1997, policies regarding juveniles have paid more attention on the issue of promoting youth sociability and the development of educational and recreational services, which actively promote youth sociability nationwide.<sup>4</sup>

Regarding the availability of [formal qualifications](#) for youth workers, several tertiary education programmes, in particular, university courses



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<sup>4</sup> Cf. EU-NET Country Factsheets: <http://eu-network.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/country-factsheets-eunet.pdf> [last checked 4/2020]

in Educational Sciences provide qualifications. Despite this formal path, it is more common that youth workers tend to have different backgrounds (e.g. psychology, sociology, sport instruction, literature and philosophy, etc.). At the same time there is a broad range of short and longer training courses offered by voluntary organisations. However, it has to be noted that the vast majority of persons involved as youth workers are voluntary and therefore many of them do not have a proper and strictly linked education. Although there have been improvements with the establishment of the Ministry of Youth, which boosted youth initiatives, and the shared responsibility about youth with other Ministries, youth workers have not a recognized occupation and a low professional status.

In [Spain youth work](#) is not an established and well-known profession. The term has often been the [subject of debate](#), as it does not exist in the Spanish language and is difficult to translate. According to Bohn and Stallmann (2007), there are marked differences compared to Northern Europe:

*“[...] In Spain this concept is difficult to apply when referring to youth policies, since there is an institutional and conceptual void on the subject, which is reflected in a variety of youth programmes. In many cases, youth work is understood as labour education policies developed at a local level and in the Third Sector, policies intended to promote the labour insertion of disadvantaged young people. The meaning of youth work in Spain is therefore fundamentally exemplified in youth policies intended to counteract the social exclusion and marginalisation of young people.”<sup>5</sup>*

[Youth policies](#) in Spain are generally aimed towards young people from all social spheres and backgrounds. Youth social work is largely the responsibility of governmental institutions. The public institutions in the field are divided into five levels. First of all, the [Instituto de la Juventud](#) (Institute of Youth - also known as INJUVE in Spain) is the [governmental office](#). There are also [offices at regional, provincial, county and local level](#). Youth policy belongs mainly to the local government.

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<sup>5</sup> Bohn I. & Stallmann L. (Eds.) 2007. [Online] [https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47261653/study\\_Final.pdf/642c51c1-34d7-4f03-b593-317bf1812009](https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47261653/study_Final.pdf/642c51c1-34d7-4f03-b593-317bf1812009) [Last checked: 28/11/2019].



The **focus** of Spanish **youth policy** is mainly on **unemployment issues** and access measures to the labour market. However, the structures and available funds for specific measures in this area are limited, which makes the situation particularly difficult for NGOs. Since the current structuring of public youth policy in 1975 followed the end of the Franco dictatorship and the transition to democracy, all institutions that focus on youth work are **calling for a restructuring** of this system. All in all, the central government in Spain currently has only a minimal specific structure for the field of youth.

The **three main principles of youth work in Andalusia**, southern Spain, based on national guidelines of the Plan Gyga 2011-2014, are

- a) Emancipation (which refers mainly to the labour market, livelihood, housing),
- b) Participation and values (participation in decision-making processes, voluntary work, democratic values, gender equality and prevention of violence against women); and
- c) Quality of life (healthy lifestyle, responsible consumption, creativity and understanding of the natural and social environment).

With regard to youth policy in the region of Andalusia, the main principles of the **Ley de Juventud de Andalucía**, which must be respected in all projects, are as follows: **Mainstreaming** (all governmental centres need to be involved), **Integrity** (addressing young people's needs in a comprehensive way), **Participation** (young people being part of designing,





developing and evaluating youth policies), [Equality](#) (same opportunities to everyone regardless of age or gender), [Accessibility](#) (free access to information for everyone), [Diversity](#) (respect and value the diversity in the region).

The situation differs in [Turkey](#), where structures and measures of [youth social work](#) have been promoted and [significantly expanded](#) in recent years. But similar to Spain the concept of the [youth worker](#) also seems to be [less known](#) and is not defined as a professional group in Turkey, unlike the concept of [youth leader](#), which is an officially [recognised qualification](#). The latter has regulations for admission: Young people who meet the conditions have to pass a test. After obtaining a youth leader certificate they are admitted to a youth centre by the Ministry.

A significant change in Turkish national [youth policy](#) could be observed in recent years. Yet, the only direct regulation on youth in the [1982 Constitution](#) is still included under the heading “[Youth Protection](#)” in [Article 58](#) as follows:

*“The State shall take measures to ensure the development and education of the youth to whom our independence and our Republic are entrusted in the light of science, in accordance with the principles and reforms of Atatürk and against views aimed at abolishing the indivisible unity of the State territory and the people. The State shall take the necessary measures to protect young people from alcoholism, narcotics, crime, gambling and similar harmful habits and from ignorance.”*

This article of the Constitution has been heavily [criticised by NGOs](#) as a [protective approach](#) that makes no mention of social rights. However, with the accession negotiations to the European Union, some youth projects within the

framework of social work started. The establishment of a [Ministry of Youth and Sport](#) in 2011 subsequently created further opportunities and brought youth policy a big step forward. The National Youth and Sports Policy Document, which was approved in the beginning of 2013 formulated its [vision of youth policy](#) as follows:

*“The main goal is to create the opportunity and ground where individuals having universal and human values, adhering to national and spiritual values, respecting the environment, having knowledge and self-confidence, effective, entrepreneurial, having a sense of social belonging, actively participating in social life, effectively using their fundamental rights and freedoms, compete with peers in the international arena, as individuals who can fully realize their potential.”<sup>6</sup>*

The [11th Development Plan](#), which sets out the goals that the country wants to achieve in the next five years (2019-2023), has been prepared with a participatory approach involving stakeholders, women, youth and other parts of civil society in the development planning process. Under the heading “Qualified people and strong society” are covered all segments of society for young and older people. In [chapter 2.3.7 Youth](#), under a) Purpose and b) Policies and Measures, detailed objectives and actions are listed. The main purpose is described as “to ensure that young people grow up with strong life skills, humanitarian and national values, and participate actively in economic and social life and decision-making mechanisms.”

[Articles 618-623](#) include numerous [projects, measures and actions](#) remarkable in their breadth and detail. They range from cultural, scientific and sporting activities to the establishment of youth centres, psychological counselling facilities, addiction prevention, media competence, increasing the number of youth social workers, cooperation with NGOs, training needs analysis for unemployed young people, short-term certificate and diploma programs in line with their skills and abilities shall be organized, especially in innovative fields such as technical and software fields. Holistic approaches that also include the family and social environment of young people shall be promoted. The given list is even not complete, however it impressively demonstrates the extraordinary scope of the development and improvements

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<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Youth and Sports, Turkey 2013.

intended. These measures together with the establishment of numerous youth centres and training offers indicate that youth work in Turkey gained momentum compared to previous years.

As a result of the federal structure in [Austria](#), responsibilities for youth policy and for non-school child and youth work are divided between the [nine federal provinces](#) and [the federal government](#). Youth policy is a cross-departmental cross-sectional matter. Therefore, youth-relevant agendas can be found in all ministries. The agendas for general affairs and the coordination of youth policy are located in the [Federal Ministry of Family Affairs and Youth \(BMFJ\)](#).<sup>7</sup> Building on the Council Resolution of 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018), the BMFJ began developing a [national youth strategy in 2012](#). As the Ministry has declared, [youth policy has the task](#) of shaping the life situation and perspectives of young people. It should help young people to cope with the demands of the youth phase and the transition to adult life. The [aim of youth policy](#) is to protect children and young people and to promote their development as independent personalities in order to lead an independent and responsible life and to use their productive and creative potential for community and social commitment.<sup>8</sup>

[Two essential principles](#) of a successful youth policy are closely linked to this basic understanding: [Firstly](#), the needs and concerns of young people themselves must always be taken into account. Not a policy for but a policy with young people is to be aimed for. [Secondly](#), youth policy cannot be fixed in one department alone, rather be taken into account in all policy areas. The concrete implementation of [youth policy](#) takes place specifically at the [various political levels](#): International, National Federation, Countries, Regions and Communities.

Three [main areas of non-school child and youth work](#) in Austria are:

- The Associations: The cultural, educational and sports associations have rich and decentralised infrastructural resources (houses, premises and/or facilities), which are to a large extent also used for youth-specific services. In

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<sup>7</sup> Since Jan. 2020 “Federal Ministry of Labour, Family and Youth”.

<sup>8</sup> For further information see: [www.bmwfj.gv.at/jugendstrategie](http://www.bmwfj.gv.at/jugendstrategie) [last checked 4/2020].

fact, however, the use of infrastructural resources by youths / youth groups is mainly only possible within a clearly limited framework. Thus, youth work often benefits educational or sports associations, but without establishing a youth-specific infrastructure of their own. The effect of the association's youth work has also been limited due to access barriers such as membership, membership fees and temporally / organisationally prescribed rules of use.

- Youth Information: The Youth Info Centres are the Austrian specialist centres for the preparation and provision of information for young people for non-commercial purposes. Youth information supports young people in their development and offers free, up-to-date, relevant and comprehensible information to help them on the threshold to adulthood. Offers and activities promote the empowerment of young people.
- Open Youth Work: Institutions of Open Youth Work are institutions of the socio-cultural infrastructure, differ from these, however, by the basically open access, i.e. the use of youth centres, clubs and youth clubs is usually not restricted to memberships and / or certain forms of use. Thus they allow for a high form of self-organisation by the young people or user groups, but at the same time they are in the field of tension between the different local groups, cliques or youth cultures active in the immediate vicinity of the youth centres and their dynamics of exclusion.

In addition, autonomous, [self-organized youth initiatives](#) should also be mentioned, finally not to forget religious forms of youth work by [churches and mosque associations](#).







The [three main types](#) of youth work cited above are reflected in three national umbrella organisations: [Bundesjugendvertretung](#) (BJV - Federal Youth Representation), [Bundesnetzwerk Österreichische Jugendinfos](#) (Federal Network of Austrian Youth Information) and [bOJA](#) - the nationwide network for open youth work. Through European umbrella organizations they cooperate with other institutions and networks of child and youth work.<sup>9</sup>

In [Germany](#) the social integration and [inclusion of young people](#) is a [basic right](#), as enshrined in Germany's [Basic Law](#) (Grundgesetz), specifically Articles 1(1) and (2). The most prominent of the legislative provisions to support young people are [the Social Code](#) (Sozialgesetzbuch). Section 1 of the Social Code Book VIII (Sozialgesetzbuch, SGB VIII) – [Children and youth services](#) states that all young people are entitled to be supported in their development and to be raised to become independent, socially competent individuals. Besides parental responsibility this section also emphasizes the

responsibility of the state by obliging child and youth services to support young people so they can develop as individuals and as members of society. [Child and youth services](#) (Kinder- und Jugendhilfe) should also help to prevent or eliminate disadvantages.

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<sup>9</sup> Further Information: [Austrian Youth Portal](#): The Austrian Youth Portal is a regularly updated and commented link collection on youth-relevant topics ([www.jugendportal.at](http://www.jugendportal.at)) and European Youth Portal: At European level, the [European Youth Portal](#) provides information on a wide range of topics such as work, health, rights, travel, education and training opportunities across Europe ([www.europa.eu/youth](http://www.europa.eu/youth)).



Germany has a wide range of [professional associations](#) and [interest groups](#) that are active in youth policy as well as specialist representation from youth services. Areas include parenting support and counselling, youth protection, welfare, non-institutional youth work, drug and addiction prevention, youth social work and career advice for young people, and funding for young people with disabilities. The regular support programmes for youth services at the national (Bund), regional (Länder) and local (Kommune) level also include funding for networks and organisation of youth work, and qualification and training for full-time and volunteer staff. This is also true for many special programmes. Some universities in Germany offer bachelor and master degrees in social work and the educational sciences with a focus on youth work. There is no association of youth workers but there are associations of professionals who work in the field of youth work, e. g. the German Federation of Social Workers.

Germany has adopted various national strategies that also serve the social inclusion of young people. There are those that include all age groups (e.g. Strategy to prevent extremism and promote democracy, Civic commitment strategy) and those directed at youth (e. g. Youth strategy). There is also a large variety of programmes and initiatives at national (Bund) and regional (Länder) level to promote and support young people's social integration specifically to young people from disadvantaged social backgrounds or who have specific needs. The Youth strategy '[Action for a child- and youth-friendly society](#)' was adopted by the [Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth \(BMFSFJ\)](#) for the period [2015 to 2018](#). The guiding principle of the youth strategy is to enable young people to participate in all matters that concern them. The youth strategy brings together a large number of partners. It is based on the [independent youth policy](#), a holistic policy approach that places young people aged 12 to 27 at the centre of action in a variety of fields. This approach is implemented across Germany through various partners and projects. Policies for young people are supplemented by policies with and by young people.

Besides the public-sector, funding is also available to non-profit [independent youth services organisations](#) (Freie Träger). Public-sector organisations cooperate in so-called working groups (Arbeitsgemeinschaften) with recognised independent child and youth services organisations and any organisations that run funded activities. The working groups are designed to ensure that the planned measures are well coordinated and complement each other.

## 2.2 Comparative analysis of the current situation of disadvantaged youngsters

In Chapter 1.4, the term [disadvantaged background](#) and the main causes of social disadvantage have already been defined. A large part of disadvantaged young people belongs to the so-called [NEETs \(Not in Education, Employment or Training\)](#). This term stands for adolescents and young adults between 16 and 24 years of age who are not attending school, not working and not undergoing training or education. But the category is, however, very heterogeneous and not completely congruent with the large group of young people who experience discrimination and marginalisation. For the NEETs can also include young people who have consciously chosen a specific lifestyle, sometimes for a limited period of time.

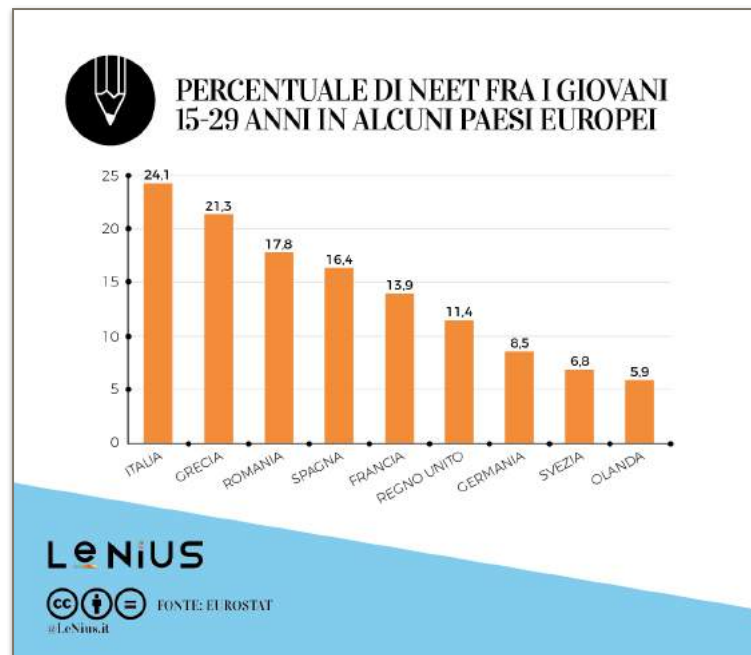
For Europe, two [main causes for NEETs](#) can be identified:

- On the one hand, the socially and in the labour market [disadvantaged group](#) of young people with a [migration background](#). Young people from [poor and educationally disadvantaged](#) families form the [largest group of NEETs](#).
- On the other hand, there are children from [higher social classes](#), where there is [no direct pressure to work](#) (“hotel-mom effect”). [Short-term NEETs](#) could be free years in the sense of sabbaticals, which are granted to the children: Since the life expectancy of today's young people is probably 90 years on average, i.e. a much longer working life is foreseeable, and since the classic pension system is already being questioned in principle, a careful choice of education is rated higher, even if there are interruptions in it and the course of education is protracted.<sup>10</sup>

In [Italy](#), the term young people with fewer opportunities is used for youngsters who for various reasons related to their specific condition, encounter greater difficulties than their peers accessing social resources and lacking involvement in society in general. In fact, their condition often presents various exclusion factors and obstacles, such as the ones mentioned before (cf. chapter 1.4).

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<sup>10</sup> Vgl. <https://austria-forum.org/af/AustriaWiki/NEET> [last checked 4/2020].



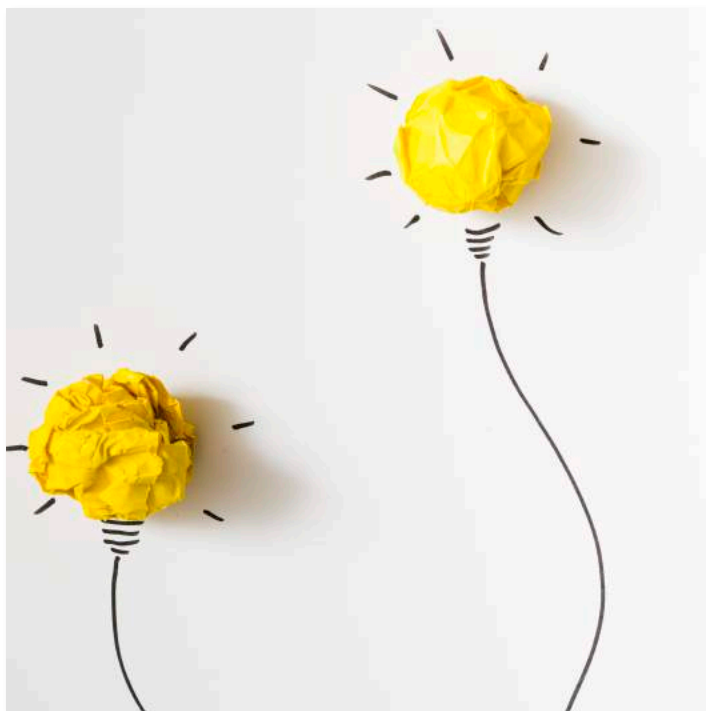
According to an article published last December by the Italian online newspaper *Le Nius*<sup>11</sup> and according to the ISTAT (The Italian National Institute of Statistics), there are around 2.116.000 so called NEETs in Italy. It is almost one in four Italians aged between 15 and 29 years old which does not work, study or train. This could also in principle mean that a lot of young Italians are traveling around the world enjoying life. Or that they are depressed and closed in the house without even the urge to study or look for work. Or that they are struggling to find a way out of the NEETs universe without finding it.

As for the territorial distribution, the southern regions present the highest data. Sicily, Calabria and Campania abundantly exceed the 30% share of NEET, followed by Puglia, Sardinia, Basilicata, Molise, Lazio, Abruzzo and Liguria with a share between the 20% and 30%.

The regions with the lowest percentages are those of the north east of the peninsula, which have data in line or only slightly higher than the European average, followed by the other central-north regions with percentages between the 15% and the 20%.

The effects of the recession, which hit the Italian labour market in the spring of 2009, were dramatic for young people: the NEETs rate rose by 3% to almost 20%. However, even before the global crisis, the Italian NEETs rate was among the highest in Europe, for both males and females. Eurostat data have been available since 2004 and since that year, in which Italy was 19.6%, the level has continued to rise: according to their last data update titled “Young people neither in

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.lenius.it/giovani-neet> [last checked 4/2020].



employment nor in education and training by sex, age and educational attainment level (NEET rates)”<sup>12</sup> in 2018 in the age range from 15 to 34 years old the rate in Italy was close to the 25% of the group.

According to Eurostat data for Spain, youth unemployment rate is one of the highest in Europe, reaching 34.3% in 2018, second only to Greece’s 39.9%. This data goes hand in hand with the school drop outs rate (from 18 to 24 years old) being as high as 18.3%, second only to Malta with 18.6%. In this context, youth policies are usually derived from policies developed on the subjects of unemployment, education, and the health system. While Spanish youth policy does not define specific disadvantaged groups, the focus lies on employment and integration into the labour market.

In Andalusia there has been a general stigmatisation of unemployed youngsters by adults. The so-called NEETs suffer from the consequences of the financial crisis of 2008, and even those who were highly qualified to work in the fields for which they had studied were

unable to find a job suitable for them or were forced to take low-quality, poorly paid jobs. This could be one of the reasons why young people do not find the motivation and enthusiasm to take part in the projects and activities that youth workers offer.

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<sup>12</sup> appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=edat\_ifse\_21 [last checked 4/2020].

In [Turkey](#) of the recent years, [youth policy](#) has focused on a [wide range of discrimination and marginalisation](#): but here too, unemployment is one of the main problems. According to current TÜİK statistics from November 2019), [youth unemployment](#) among [15-24 year-olds](#) rose to 27,4 % in 2019.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to unemployment or low wages and deficits in the education sector, other obstacles are also mentioned which constitute the specific situation in Turkey: Interestingly, this also applies to [close family relationships](#), which can also have [hindering effects](#): The most important of the financial impossibilities is the increase in dependency on the family due to the insufficient state scholarships and the low return of part-time jobs. It is found, that the close relationship with their families, [economic and emotional dependence](#) for young people is one of the most important reasons that prevent them from making decisions freely in their daily lives. Especially when families are raising their children, they give efforts to keep them away from politics and this has [de-politicizing effects and prevents young people from participating in collective actions](#). In addition to the high commitments to the family financially, intense emotional relationships with the family affect the young people's decisions about their own lives. Additionally to the factors already described for disadvantage and the affected groups, the issue of "[child brides](#)" is also mentioned for Turkey.

There is also an important [spatial issue](#) that is referred to in the report from Turkey. Depending on the circumstances, the [local infrastructure](#) may be a reason for disadvantage. Can a town, a city be described as youth-friendly or not? Are there suitable facilities (youth centres, cafés, libraries, etc.) that can be used by young people? To what extent are they accessible to all?

[Austria](#) is often praised as exemplary in terms of youth employment in Europe, even after the economic and financial crisis since 2007, the youth unemployment has not risen significantly (2018: 6.4 %).<sup>14</sup> However, a comprehensive [survey conducted 2012](#) by the Institute of Sociology at the University of Linz in cooperation with the Chamber of Labour of

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<sup>13</sup> [ahvalnews.com/turkey-youth/young-unemployed-and-disillusioned-turkeys-youth](https://ahvalnews.com/turkey-youth/young-unemployed-and-disillusioned-turkeys-youth) [last checked 4/2020].

<sup>14</sup> Eurostat Data-Explorer, [appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/](https://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/) (last update: 3/ 2020).

Upper Austria identified about 75,000 NEET youths between 16 and 24 years of age in Austria, i.e. 8.2% of the age group. Their integration into the labour market is sometimes considered difficult and represents one of the major challenges for labour market policy. In 2018 (annual average) 63 900 young people (15 to 24 years) were neither in employment nor in education and training (NEET), i.e. 6.8% of the young people (women: 7.1%, men: 6.6%). The EU-28 average of the NEET rate is 11.6% (2018).<sup>15</sup>

Two specific risk groups are identified by the above mentioned study: women and young people from migrant families. One possible reason is that male youths find it easier to access apprenticeship places or also more often take on auxiliary activities at a young age and thus fall outside this indicator. In 2016, around 551,500 young people with a migration background (0-24 years) were living in Austria, which corresponds to almost a quarter of the total youth population.<sup>16</sup> The risk of exclusion of the first generation born in Austria is high. But a significantly higher overall risk therefore affects migrant women, even those from the first generation born in Austria. One quarter (just under 24%) of 16 to 24-year-old women of migrant background are affected by the NEET phenomenon (men: 13.5%) due to the above cited study.

In principle, the NEET group presents a very heterogeneous picture. Roughly the following NEET subgroups in Austria are to be considered: Unemployed young early school leavers, young mothers with and without migration background, apprenticeship graduates in rural areas, school graduates in waiting position, older unemployed youngsters (20 to 24 years) or young people with diseases. Regarding the possible individual risk factors it can be observed that early school leaving has a strong influence on the NEET risk. Gender-specific differences include the fact that caring responsibilities are a major explanatory factor for young women, while for male NEETs, unemployment experiences and a poor economic situation in particular pose risks.

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<sup>15</sup> [www.statistik.gv.at](http://www.statistik.gv.at) - NEET Rate [last checked 4/2020].

<sup>16</sup> [www.integrationsfonds.at/publikationen/zahlen-fakten-alt/migration-integration-schwerpunkt-kinder-und-jugend](http://www.integrationsfonds.at/publikationen/zahlen-fakten-alt/migration-integration-schwerpunkt-kinder-und-jugend). The term “migrant background” is officially used for people whose both or one parent are born abroad.



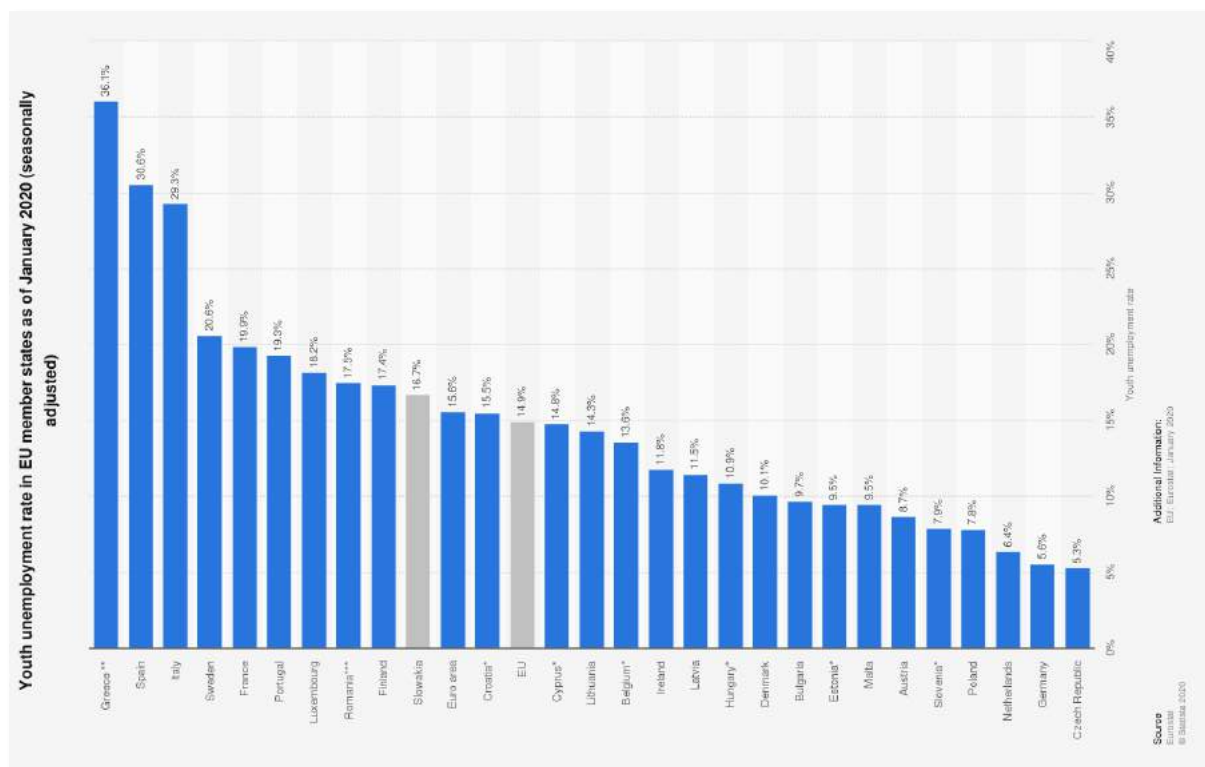
The situation in [Germany](#) has been described as follows: [Around one quarter](#) of young Germans grow up with disadvantages. [Disadvantage](#) is taken to mean the presence of various [indicators of risk](#). The three most common indicators are [poverty](#), [unemployment](#) and [poor level of education](#). The socioeconomic situation of young people is composed of the disadvantages suffered by their parents, their parents' educational status (school qualification), and the young people's dependence on e.g., state welfare.

Within this population group, adolescents and in particular young adults comprise those who are increasingly at risk of poverty over the last decade in particular. Over the last few years, the [poverty rate](#) has been [highest among young adults aged 21 to 30](#). Children and young people represent the largest age group in receipt of benefits under Social Code Book II (SGB II). However, there are major regional variations. For instance, the rate in [East Germany \(25.3 per cent\)](#) is almost double than in [West Germany \(13.4 per cent\)](#). Moreover, [9.5 % of 18 to 24-year-olds](#) in Germany have [not completed secondary school](#) and are not in further education or training, referred to as [early school-leavers](#). At 33 %, the share of 30 to under 35-year-olds from the [immigrant community](#) who have [no vocational training](#) qualification is [around three times as high](#) as their peers who are not from the immigrant community (10 %). Young people of non-German nationality are equally disproportionately more likely not to have a vocational qualification. But as already explained above, the [social integration and inclusion](#) of young people is a [basic right](#), as enshrined in Germany's Basic Law (Grundgesetz), specifically Articles 1(1) and (2). Besides parental responsibility this section also emphasizes the responsibility of the state by obliging child and youth services to support young people so they can develop as individuals and as members of society.



[Postscript](#) on the current situation (April 2020): For a few months the worldwide "corona crisis" has led to social changes in Europe, the extent of which is not yet foreseeable. Serious effects on the labour market, growing unemployment figures etc. are also being felt in the partner countries of this study. Spain and Italy are particularly affected, but noticeable effects can also be seen in Germany, Austria and Turkey. In fact, a situation of upheaval is beginning to emerge here, which can only be hinted at, but not yet reflected in this report. Critical issues of social (in)justice seem to be addressed more frequently: in view of globalization, economy of growth or the new experience of "systemically relevant occupations" in nursing or retail, which were previously underpaid.

It remains to be seen whether this development leads to sustained debates and social change. The chart from Eurostat below therefore is not quite up to date: It depicts the data before this change – the situation in the light of which the present study and the discussions with the focus groups took place.



## 2.3 The main challenges in daily youth work

The issues and challenges turn out to be manifold for youth workers in the partner countries.

One of the major challenges in [Italy](#) has been the [drastic reduction of the public funds](#) and the consequent need to break free from dependence on public funds by diversifying financial resources (e.g. by selling products or services, identifying donors and sponsors, public procurement, crowdfunding, etc.), while at the same time avoiding management strategies oriented towards the creation of a market, which would undermine the social mission of youth organisations. The [lack of national support](#) for youth work in Italy is accompanied by a [lack of public recognition](#) or regulation of the specific professional role of the youth worker or the youth informal educator. Recognition and evaluation of youth work practice seems to be still in its infancy, although conversely youth workers in Italy have a [high degree of autonomy](#) and are largely immune from managerial interference and bureaucratic regimes.

As the public structuring of [youth policies](#) in [Spain](#) was done in 1975 after the Franco dictatorship ended and the transition to democracy took place and as most of the projects work top-down, there are widespread [calls for restructuring](#) of this system. Moreover the findings from Spain identify a wide range of obstacles or challenges in terms of [reaching their target group](#). The causes may be the following:

- Lack of recognition of youth worker as a profession: As we have seen, youth work is still rather unknown in the field of education, so the figure of the youth worker is still not recognised as a profession. This leads to a lack of trust from young people and the people around them as well as public and private institutions.
- Lack of knowledge about youth work and programmes like Erasmus+: Most young people in Spain do not know the main activities of youth workers because there is not enough information available for them. One of the reasons why this information does not reach young people is because they do not know where to find it, which is why informative talks in schools or universities might be a good solution. Even though this has been slowly

changing in the last few years, there is still a lot of work to be done. Many times, the experiences people have are transmitted through word of mouth.

- Lack of participation, interest and motivation from young people: Sometimes, the challenges that youth workers face when implementing their projects can be the lack of enthusiasm from young people and their unwillingness to get involved. Another reason is the progressive loss of the motivation they had when the project started.
- Lack of grants to organisations from the public institutions: As opposed to other European countries, public institutions do not offer the possibility of granting funds to youth work organisations in order to develop and implement projects aimed at young people. In other cases, this lack of funding means that many organisations, youth centres or youth associations cannot organise their activities in a place where participants can feel safe.

In [Turkey](#), there are several reasons preventing young people from participation in centres, associations or organisations involved in youth or self-development activities. One reason is the [family background](#). Some families believe that the involvement of their children in the activities of such an institution would result in political problems, that their [children would risk ideological](#) impact ("brainwashing", nationalist, communist, anarchist influences). However, youth work is also complicated by the fact that [voluntary work](#) for young people is not exactly seen as desirable. Nobody likes to be "the ready-one". Young people see the situation of voluntary work at best as a [burdensome duty](#).

Another challenge is that some associations, organisations or centres [lack in sufficient equipment](#) for their activities. This means, for example, the lack of rooms or inadequate premises. The location and equipment of the building and facilities are often insufficient for the activities. A [disability-friendly design](#), and the [needs of the target groups](#) should be taken into account in any case. The fact that youth workers need support in finding suitable facilities, materials and resources, which is often a difficult task, leads to burdens and delays or interruptions in their activities.

[Negative economic developments](#) - rising inflation rates, external borrowing, shortcomings and inadequacies in the education system, rising unemployment rates, the decision of qualified young people to live in other countries, the lack

of employment, no importance of the degrees, the idea that all jobs are handled through networks of relationships - lead to despair and make [young people look pessimistically into the future](#). These hardships make it difficult for youth workers to show young people that a better future is possible.

[Rising unemployment](#), especially among young people, has become a major problem for the countries of Europe, including Turkey. Many young people leave school early, which is a high risk of unemployment and [social exclusion](#). The same risk is faced by a large number of disadvantaged young people who are not qualified. The [economic fear](#) of these young people makes it difficult for youth workers to reach them and involve them in their activities. After all, the [main concern](#) of disadvantaged young people is not to engage in youth activities or to visit another country, but to [find a job](#) as soon as possible and [gain economic freedom](#).



In a comprehensive study on [Open Youth Work](#) in [Austria](#) by Gspurnik and Heimgartner,<sup>17</sup> based on interviews with participants and youth workers, complex challenges were addressed. One of them relates to the [training situation](#). There is a broad variety of training opportunities for youth work in Austria. However, the wide range is also seen as a problem. The following statement of a youth worker describes the market dynamics to which many training courses are subject:

*"In general I find such training courses problematic because there's a big supply. Far too many different offers, where you cannot know, or at least people in the training often do not know if it is recognized or not, will it provide me a*

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<sup>17</sup> Gspurnik/Heimgartner 2016.





*chance or not. Because everyone sells his offer as great and super, but how it really works on the job market you don't know. To be honest, I find it rather thoughtless of the Dachverband (umbrella organisation), although I usually give it a lot of credit, but the fact that you are constantly attending university courses and training courses that at some point are worth nothing. (...) I think that's stupid."*<sup>18</sup>

Discontent also arises from the continuous [professionalization efforts](#). If the unit of ECTS points is used as the basis for training and is constantly increasing, this leads to a permanent, forced running behind of untrained employees, which leads to resentment:

*"In the beginning, you entered into open youth work without any training at all. Then this basic course was required. Then you took the basic course and then they said, no, that's not good enough, you must have 60 ECTS. So you have completed the course... and then you found out, all right, but if I change the field of action, for example to youth welfare, then these 60 ECTS are again insufficient, then I need 120 ECTS. This*

*means that you are constantly confronted in your field with the fact that what you just did, very quickly becomes obsolete, which also contributes to a certain dissatisfaction (...)." <sup>19</sup>*

There are activities that are challenging in terms of [time budget](#) for the youth workers. The evenings (20-22 hours) and Saturday working hours are considered as critical for family life. Individual attractions (e.g. skate halls) can be very extensive in their [opening hours](#).

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid. p. 78, 79.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.



The [financial pressure](#) is shaping up in many federal states, especially in the fact that the [financing is limited in time and work contracts](#). As a result, the youth workers annually or biennially worries for its own existence, although the open youth work is generally continuous.

Some of the respondents were also critical of the fact that, despite legal regulations, youth work in some places is confronted with illegal drug use. Prejudice and racist attacks represent additional problem areas. Also radicalisation is perceived as a very topical and serious problem.<sup>20</sup>

In [Germany](#), associations and organisations involved in child and youth work have criticised a [creeping deterioration](#) in the past few years.<sup>21</sup> The official number of youth offers has decreased by 18,000 offers only in 4 years (2014 to 2018). The reasons for this are manifold:

- Decline in expenditure on youth work
- Extension of tasks and responsibilities
- Increase in administrative and bureaucratic burdens
- Decrease in the scientific examination of child and youth work
- Subordinated treatment compared to other social tasks.
- These general developments also have an impact on the day-to-day work with young people with fewer opportunities.

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 136-137.

<sup>21</sup> Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Kinder- und Jugendhilfe – AGJ 2018; Deutscher Bundesjugendring 2019.

Firstly, there are [too few jobs](#) for full-time or part-time youth workers who specialise in and work with the needs of disadvantaged young people. In addition, the [low public awareness](#) of youth work leads to a [decrease in volunteers](#) who work with disadvantaged young people. Both of these factors result in those working with disadvantaged young people being [overburdened](#) and not having enough time for individual young people and young adults.

The increase in [bureaucratic requirements](#) (for example, compliance with the DSGVO<sup>22</sup> and protection against other legal consequences) leads to a higher risk for youth workers. Particularly in the case of full-time and part-time youth workers, the increased [administrative and documentation effort](#) means that they have to spend more time on bureaucratic tasks in their daily work and therefore have less time for the actual work with disadvantaged young people.

Finally, all youth workers face the problem that young people rarely have to deal with just one problem. Rather, they are exposed to [multiple factors for disadvantage](#) (as outlined in chapter 1.4), which are mutually dependent and mutually reinforcing. As a result, young people and youth workers face not just one but [several problems and challenges](#) that need to be tackled.

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<sup>22</sup> The Regulation on Basic Data Protection by the European Union.

## 2.4. Current tools and good practices working with disadvantaged youth

In [Italy](#) reaching and involving young people with fewer opportunities represents a [key challenge](#) in youth work. NGOs, non-profit organizations and local active youth workers can play a key role in overcoming obstacles, effectively reaching and involving young people with fewer opportunities in [entrepreneurship initiatives](#). This is the base for youth workers, because building relations with and engaging beneficiaries is embedded in their daily work, and they continuously strive to adapt their communication and information channels to the specific needs and characteristics of those target groups.

An evaluation of the work carried out in the project [YEP- Young Enterprise Program](#) identified a series of effective ways to connect with and stimulate the interest of youth at risks, one of this is a short list of key messages to give to young people about the job seeking process and more especially about entrepreneurship as:

- It is not only limited to highly technological people or graduates;
- It means turning ideas into actions;
- It can turn personal passions - as smaller as they are (e.g. baking cakes) - into a way of financially sustain oneself;
- It is a way to become aware of personal strengths and weaknesses as well as own goals in life, and to strengthen self-confidence;
- It can help in acquiring and developing competencies and knowledge useful for the labour market in general (even if one decides in the end not to become an entrepreneur him/herself);
- It is an opportunity to meet with peers and like-minded people, exchange ideas and integrate skills.

Additional funds are available for any small-medium enterprise and start-up in Europe (in different sectors), and are therefore accessible by young entrepreneurs as well.<sup>23</sup>

Another interesting tool from the same project is the [experimental social tutoring](#).

Social tutoring refers to an [individual and tailor-made support](#) provided to every single young person participating [in the YEP project](#). This represented more than a simple tutoring of the participants to the training course and incubation programme and meant an actual 360-degree “taking care” of the youngsters, by considering each person cultural and social characteristics and needs. The [social tutor](#) was thus a specific person who, coming from various backgrounds depending on the organization – youth worker, but also, social worker, trainer, etc. – supported young people – with their individual specificity, needs, talents and potentials.<sup>24</sup>

[Spain](#): People working in the field of youth must constantly receive trainings in order to assess young people’s needs and choose the adequate course of action so their relationship with youngsters is beneficial to them. This also means that they always have to look for new and innovative methods to use in the development and implementation of their activities and projects.

[Platforms](#) like [INJUVE](#) are very useful tools for youth workers as well as young people looking for activities that might be attractive for them. In their website, they [offer information](#) about different activities, scholarships, job offers, training courses or educational opportunities open to the public. Moreover, having a wide network of youth workers and people working in the field can be very favourable in order to find training opportunities.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> <http://startupeuropeclub.eu/eu-funds-and-support/> [last checked 4/2020].

<sup>24</sup> <https://youngenterpriseprogram.com/> [last checked 4/2020].

<sup>25</sup> [www.injuve.es](http://www.injuve.es) [last checked 4/2020].

Youth work [assists young people](#) in becoming aware of themselves, what they like, what they want to do in the future, the best ways to [achieve the objectives](#) that they set for themselves, etc. Participating in an organisation related to youth work improves their [self-esteem](#), encourages [positive atmospheres](#) between young people and is necessary for them to develop an [open-minded mentality](#). It is also very helpful to raise their [awareness on their families](#), people they know and the [communities](#) that they live in, and it can be useful to improve their [coexistence](#). The activities and projects developed by organisations and entities are strengthening [young people's network](#) and their [social circles](#). It is possible to meet people that have the same interests in order to build strong friendships, but it is also useful to meet experts in the same professional field who could be interested in future collaborations.

Finally, youth work serves as a tool for young people to develop certain [skills and competences](#) in diverse areas that will be useful in the future to find a job in an increasingly competitive [labour market](#).

In [Turkey](#), the [European Commission Delegation to Turkey](#) and [Turkish National Agency](#)<sup>26</sup> provides support for youth work with disadvantaged young people: promoting youth participation, common European values, strengthening social integration, increasing intercultural understanding, a sense of commitment to a community and preventing violent radicalization. In this context, [Erasmus+ Program](#) is also an effective tool for encouraging the inclusion of individuals from disadvantaged groups.



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<sup>26</sup> For more information see [www.ua.gov.tr](http://www.ua.gov.tr) [last checked 4/2020]

The most comprehensive and [free service](#) offered [for disadvantaged youth](#) in Turkey are [youth centres](#) operating under the [Ministry of Youth and Sports](#). Youth centres receive intense applications and membership and their numbers are increasing every year. Their number, which was 16 in 2011, increased to 300 according to the latest data from 2020. The number of youth centre members, which was around 8000 in 2011, has exceeded 2 million today.

In the [youth centres](#), which conduct their activities with a content formed by [blending scientific, spiritual, aesthetic and traditional values](#), there are workshops on social sciences, personal development, religious sciences, innovation, values, language education, healthy life, sports and fine arts. In these workshops, local young people are qualified under dozens of titles like history, literature, philosophy-logic, law, drama, communication, interview techniques, etiquette, Quran and its meaning, Islamic culture and civilization, media and social media, software-coding-robotics, design, Turkish culture and civilization, morals and values, city culture, Ottoman, English, Arabic, sign language, lifestyle development, nutrition, sports, music, theatre, painting, handicrafts, architecture.

Awareness is raised in youth centres by organizing events on various topics. Through the clubs established within the centres efforts are made to internalize the feeling of empathy, which is one of the universal human values, such as brotherhood law and social peace, protection of orphans, and awareness-raising activities such as book reading circles, nature walks, bicycle activities, and fight against addiction.<sup>27</sup>

[Austria](#): The offers and methods available in the [Association's Youth Work](#) are as varied as the organisations themselves. They can impart a variety of competence and knowledge. Starting with the so-called soft skills and extending to technical and organisational abilities, young people are encouraged to develop their personal skills and knowledge and their commitment to civil society.

The second main sphere is the [Austrian Youth Info Service](#). Its offers and methods

- are directed towards the needs and interests of young people,

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<sup>27</sup> Bundesministerium für Familie und Jugend 2015, p. 11.



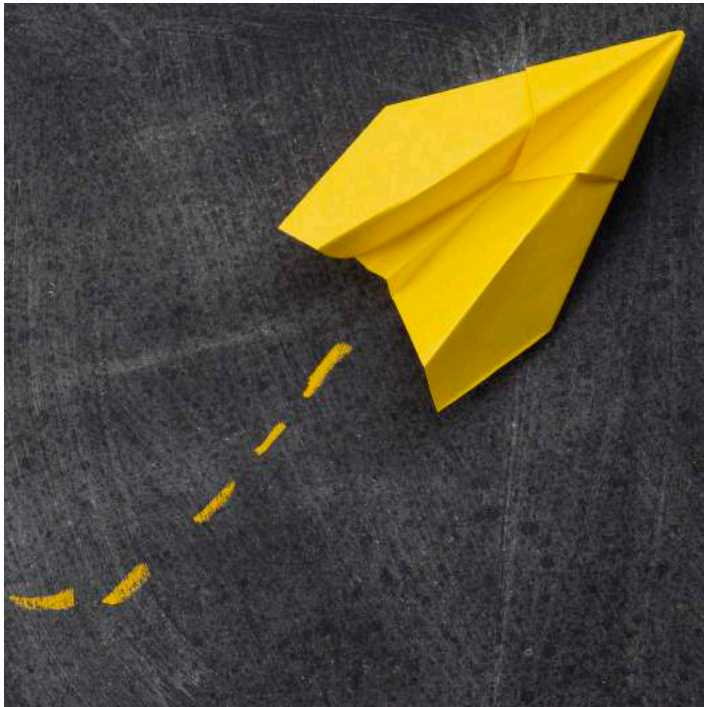
- offer free and target group-oriented information on all youth-relevant topics,
- prepare subject matters in an easily understandable way,
- refer young people directly to facilities that specialise in their needs,
- use communication channels that are adapted to the living environments of young people,
- offer orientation and information as a basis for a self-determined life,
- teach young people information literacy,
- support young people in the implementation of their own projects,
- act in accordance with the principles of the European Youth Information Charter and the principles for online youth information.<sup>28</sup>

The third area, [Open Child and Youth Work](#), pursues the following main approaches: [Focus on open space and leisure](#), focus on [target groups](#) and focus on [social space](#). The offers are developed together with the target groups and are oriented towards their living environments and needs. They make it possible to gain experience in leisure time without pressure to perform and without rigid efficiency orientation.

The offers of open child and youth work are more widely and frequently attended by [disadvantaged young people](#) than the aforementioned associations or youth information. Programs will be developed together with the young people and are therefore based on their needs and knowledge. Depending on the target group, the offers range from sports, parties and music to creative activities such as workshops, projects or rehearsal rooms for bands, support in finding a job, assistance with school and family problems. In the [so-called open mode](#) (offener Betrieb) - i.e. during normal opening

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<sup>28</sup> For more information see [www.jugendportal.at](http://www.jugendportal.at) (a regularly updated and commented link collection on youth-relevant topics.)



hours in a youth club or youth centre - young people can use the facilities for an informal organization of their leisure time, professionally accompanied by the employees. However, open youth work is not only "indoors", but also "outdoors" - in parks, at railway stations and bus stops, in residential areas and on public sports fields. Which offers are arranged and how, whether a football match, a concert in the park or an afternoon of games, is organised together with the young people. In this way they can get involved, shape their living environment themselves and take responsibility for it.

**Germany:** In order to promote the integration and inclusion of disadvantaged young people, youth workers and youth social workers need to pay close attention to individual young people and their needs. Ideally, youth workers are not alone with their task, but can cooperate with the school, the families, the employment and youth welfare office or other institutions. A good network of supporters promotes the integration of disadvantaged young people.

The most effective tools in practice have proved to be the strengthening of the self-esteem of disadvantaged young people and their participation in public and social life. By promoting these two aspects, the youth workers can succeed in integration.

Furthermore, the preventive and outreach approach has proved its worth in practice, i.e. youth social workers approach the families of disadvantaged young people as early as possible and work together with them to prevent disadvantages for their target groups.

## 2.5 National results of youth work. Proposals for its further promotion

**Italy:** To understand the impact and the results of youth work with youngsters from disadvantaged background, we can refer to the publication *The Impact of Youth Work in Europe: A Study of Five European Countries*.<sup>29</sup> The project, in fact, applied a participatory evaluation methodology entitled **Transformative Evaluation**, which collated young people's own accounts of the impact of youth work on their lives collecting their stories and direct experience. Through this procedure the Italian partner of this research, the University of Bari, run three cycles of Transformative Evaluation implemented in three different organisations, collecting 151 **"Significant Change Stories"** written by young people who used to attend the three youth centres. The most common theme was improvement of job chances, which occurred in 57 cases out of the total amount, followed by improvement of sense of community, self-determination, relating to others and valuing diversity, developing or discovering new skills and participation in innovation and change.

These findings illustrate the significant benefits these centres brought daily in their local community, the role they play in community development in the outcomes associated with increased "sense of belonging" and the "valuing of diversity" and, at the same time, they have clearly enabled an **empowering process** of change for both individuals – in promoting "self-determination" – and within the community in supporting and facilitating projects which involve **social and cultural change**.

**Spain:** A decisive factor for young people to take part or be involved in youth work is the **quality of youth work** itself, which is reflected by the **professionalism** that youth workers have. This is why one of the main concerns in the field of youth work should be the **proper training** of those who choose to dedicate their lives to young people. As it has already been established, youth worker is still not recognised as a profession in Spain. This position is mostly covered by social workers, social educators, psychologists, youth leaders, etc. This means that most of them have completed higher education. Nevertheless, as it is not a defined profession, there are no guidelines and many times there is a lack of

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<sup>29</sup> <https://www.humak.fi/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/The-Impact-Of-Youth-Work.pdf> (This comprehensive study includes findings from France, United Kingdom, Italy, Finland and Estonia.) [last checked 4/2020].

knowledge on the necessary competences to work in youth work. As a consequence, [self-evaluation](#) can be considered essential in the training needs in youth work.

It is also very important for youth workers to keep learning while they are in the field of working with youngsters. They should [attend trainings](#) specifically designed for them in order to update their skills and knowledge. Having a [theoretical background](#) can be considered as important as the [practical experience](#) gained through working in contact with young people themselves.

**Turkey:** It is necessary to [provide holistic and ongoing support](#) for the strengthening of youth working organisations and especially youth workers. They affect a large part of the society in terms of their field of activity. Well-trained youth workers will be required to provide an impactful quality service to such a wide community. At this point, [professional training](#) contributes to an effective and impactful youth work. Understanding the daily practice, wishes and expectations of youth workers will provide an opportunity for valid direction and perspective, and to increase the benefits that these employees create individually and socially. The [Human profile of the 21st century Turkish society](#) has been described as “individuals with advanced thinking, perception and problem solving skills, who can use information creatively, suitable for the identity of the information age, who are prone to science and technology production, are not afraid to know and explain themselves”.<sup>30</sup> In this context youth workers today should possess the following [skills](#), or develop them in further training courses: \*Creativity and innovation skills \*Critical thinking and problem-solving skills \*Communication and collaboration \*Information literacy \*Media literacy \*Flexibility and cohesion \*Entrepreneurship and self-direction \*Social and intercultural skills \*Productivity and responsibility \*Leadership.

Further [national level recommendations](#) from Turkey can be listed as follows:

- To give youth workers the opportunity to experience different working environments in other countries,
- To better understand the European dimension of the studies in the field of youth,

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<sup>30</sup> Cf. Genç/ Eryaman2007, p. 89-102.

- To improve professional, intercultural and language competencies of youth workers,
- Encouraging the exchange of experiences and methods for non-formal education and youth work in Europe,
- To contribute to the establishment of stronger and more qualified partnerships among youth organisations across Europe,
- To promote the mobility and change of youth workers aiming to acquire new skills and abilities.

**Austria:** (Open) youth work is part of the life world of many young people. Therefore, within this framework kinds of **informal learning** always take place. These educational processes promote skills that enable young people to lead **self-determined lives**. They experience themselves as co-designers of their own education. It is equally self-evident that the basic mission of open youth work includes **non-curricular, participatory, low-threshold** and **voluntary** educational processes.

Central topics include the promotion of political education and participation, health literacy, cultural education, gender-reflective identity development, digital education and media literacy. Hence, a need for **basic and further training** for youth workers also arises in this context.

**Germany:** Disadvantaged young people in particular need to have experiences that strengthen their **self-confidence** and promote their **personal development**. This is best achieved through **low-threshold** offers that give the young people **stability** and a firm foundation before they can grow on it. For this reason, the **skills of youth workers**, whether professional or voluntary, must be strengthened in these areas.





# Empirical Findings – Practices, challenges and further training needs

03

Having so far explored the national framework conditions and specific aspects of youth work in the partner countries, this chapter presents the empirical results from the focus groups.

### 3.1 Evaluation of Participants Questionnaires

In all partner countries, [focus groups of about 20 to 22 participants](#) working especially with disadvantaged youth have been set up. The majority of the interviewees work as youth or social workers and youth leaders, but there are also psychologists, consultants, teachers or coaches among them.

With the help of a structured questionnaire and open group interviews, in which some key questions were also discussed, first insights into their daily practice, possible difficulties/challenges and their further needs for training and support were to be gained. On the basis of the questionnaires, the following data and information - among others - were collected, which are shortly summarized here:

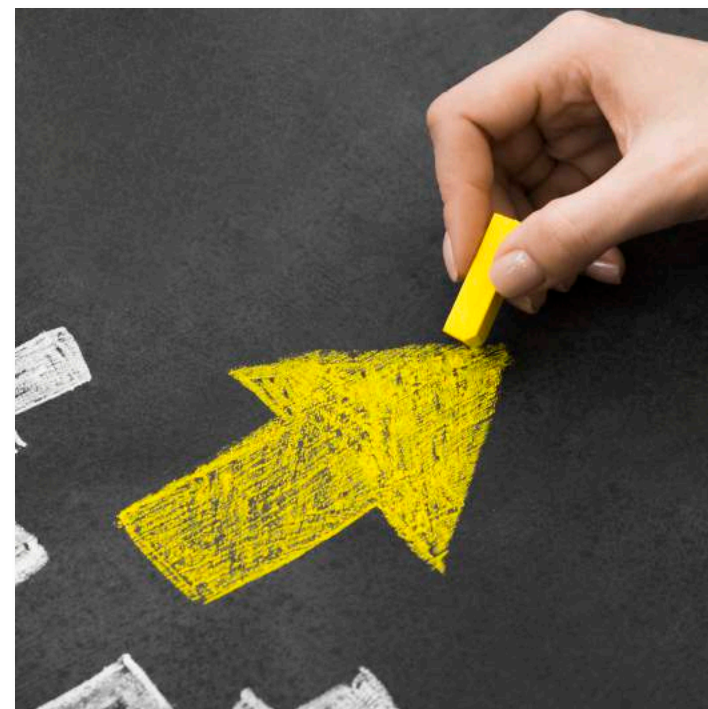
The [age range](#) of the interviewees was very wide, from 19 to 56 years. But on average they are between mid-20s and mid-30s. Regarding [gender](#), strikingly the majority are female (on average more than two thirds) in all partner countries, which might roughly represent the respective national situation.

The average [educational level](#) of the respondents is very high. The majority of the respondents in the partner countries have higher education qualifications - but not necessarily in social or youth work. Some of them even held a doctorate. This is also due to the fact that in some countries (Austria, Germany or Italy) a considerable part of youth workers are volunteers - although no detailed information has been gathered on this issue. In Italy and Spain the concept of youth worker is less known, so they often come from different backgrounds. In Italy, for example, it is common that youth workers tend to have considerably different backgrounds (e.g. psychology, sociology, sport instruction, literature and philosophy and so on) and it has explicitly been noted that the vast majority of persons involved as youth workers are voluntary and therefore many of them do not have a proper and strictly linked education. At the same time there is a broad range of short and longer training courses organized by voluntary organizations. In some cases these can be

considered as further training for those starting to work as professionals in local youth policies without having appropriate qualifications. In the Turkish focus group, on the other hand, all have a university degree and appropriate training in youth work or as certified youth leaders which possibly reflects their employment in public institutions of the Ministry.

The interviewees mainly work with [target groups](#) between 15 and 25 years, but some of them also with children and a few with young adults up to 30 years of age. [Work experience](#) ranges from a few months to more than 20 years, in the average between about 3 to 7 years.

Regarding their [organizations](#), the vast majority of respondents operate in the non-profit sector, NGOs and open youth work, some also in public institutions, associative youth work or sport clubs, only occasionally in religious organisations. But as far as the Turkish respondents concerned, they are all working in public institutions, more precisely youth centres of the Ministry of Youth and Sports.



About two thirds of all respondents said that they were [aware of initiatives and policies](#) concerning youth work in their country. (In Germany only half of them; In Turkey, all have replied in the affirmative.) And the vast majority, more than three quarters of all respondents, stated that they are [interested in further education and training](#).

The youth workers were also asked to name five activities that are part of their [main daily tasks](#). The results are so varied that they cannot be listed here in detail. In any case, they reflect the whole range of formal and informal activities that our respondents have to deal with in their daily work.

These [daily activities](#) can be roughly divided into the following areas:

- Counselling and Advisory activities for young people (job and individual goal orientation, family support and intermediation)
- Leisure activities and non-formal education, planning and implementation of manifold activities and events for youngsters
- Educational activities in subjects needed, language courses for migrants, homework support etc.
- Project management, administration and bureaucracy (including public relation and networking, research activities; reports; calling for volunteers, their supervision and coordination)

By the [German focus group](#) were additionally specified actions as:

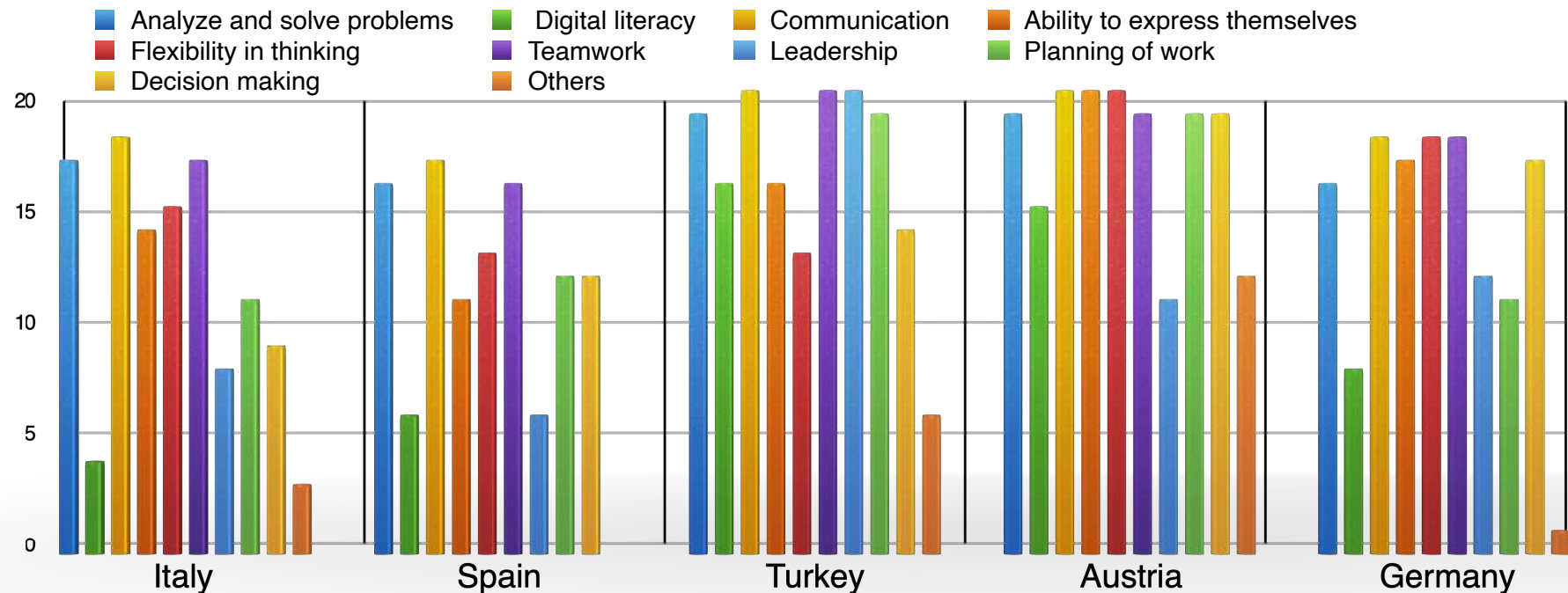
- Organizing daily life with young people living in a youth welfare institution<sup>31</sup> (daily routines – getting up, getting dressed, personal hygiene, cleaning the house, cooking/preparing food, shopping, assist with homework, cooperation with youth welfare organization/ parents/ schools ...)
- Psychotherapy sessions with youngsters, horse riding therapy and work with horses and youngsters

Let us now take a comparative look at which [general competences](#) the respondents consider as important for youth work and which [soft skills and abilities](#) they actually need in their concrete daily work. For an overview we have compiled the results in graphs: They show a snapshot from the questionnaires, of course not a representative study. First of all,

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<sup>31</sup> Youth welfare institutions are facilities in Germany in which youngsters live who cannot stay in their families anymore. The decision over moving into such a youth welfare institution can be ordered by the state welfare centre (in case of child endangerment) or can be made by request of the family (parents or children). About 50% of the accommodated youths are in a forced placement that was ordered by the youth welfare office. In the remaining 50%, the young people and their families seek help and support together.

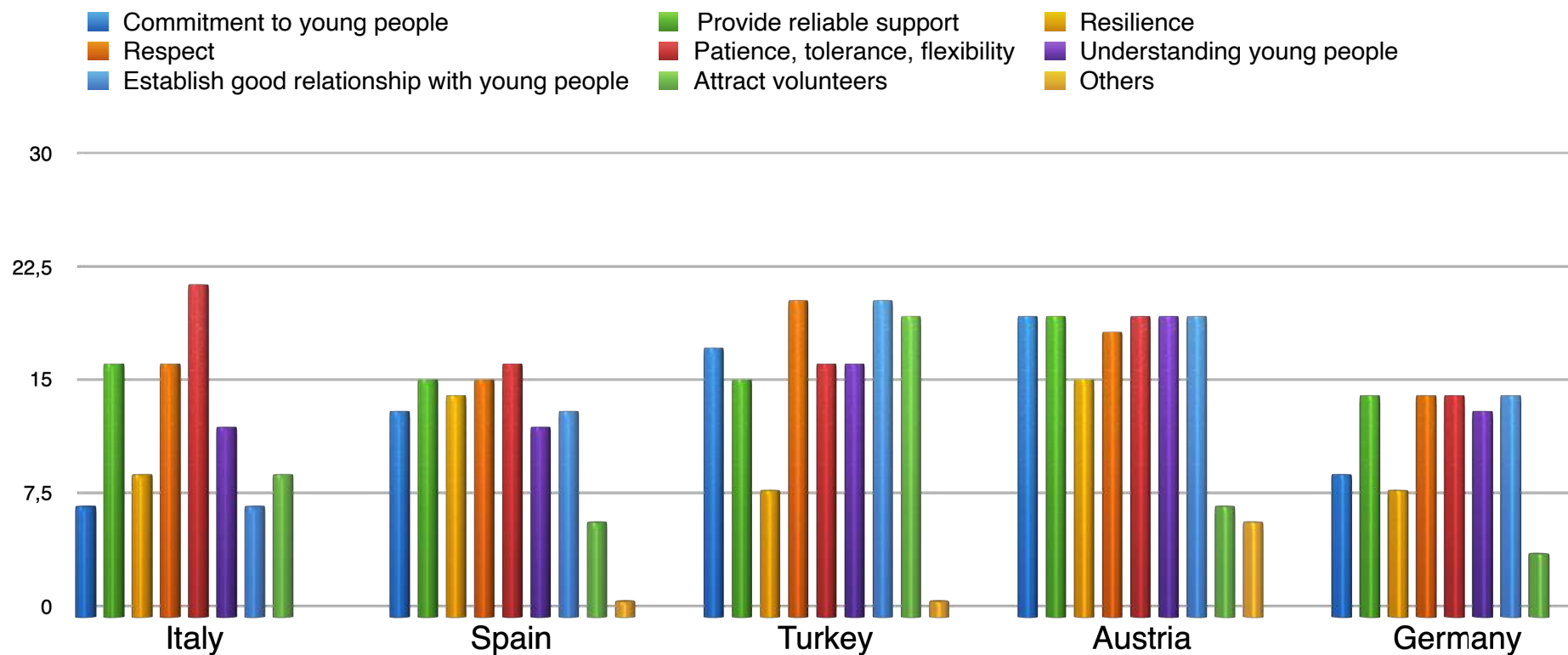
however, they give an impression of the wide range of [informal competences](#) and [personal preconditions](#) required for youth work.



[Mentions under “Others”: Participants from [Austria](#) added: empathy (named particularly frequently), resilience, frustration tolerance, ability for reflection and critical self-reflection, political education and creativity. Participants from Turkey named: empathy, humanism, education, creativity, ability to work disciplined. One Interviewee from [Germany](#) added: time management.]

Here it is particularly noticeable that "leadership" was rated as less important in all partner countries (except Turkey), whereas social skills such as communication or teamwork were particularly high. Digital literacy" is also not at the forefront here, although this was repeatedly pointed out in the discussions with the focus groups.

Especially the Austrian and Turkish participants added important personal characteristics and attitudes as empathy, resilience, creativity, which partly overlap with the information in the following diagram on personal requirements and "soft skills".

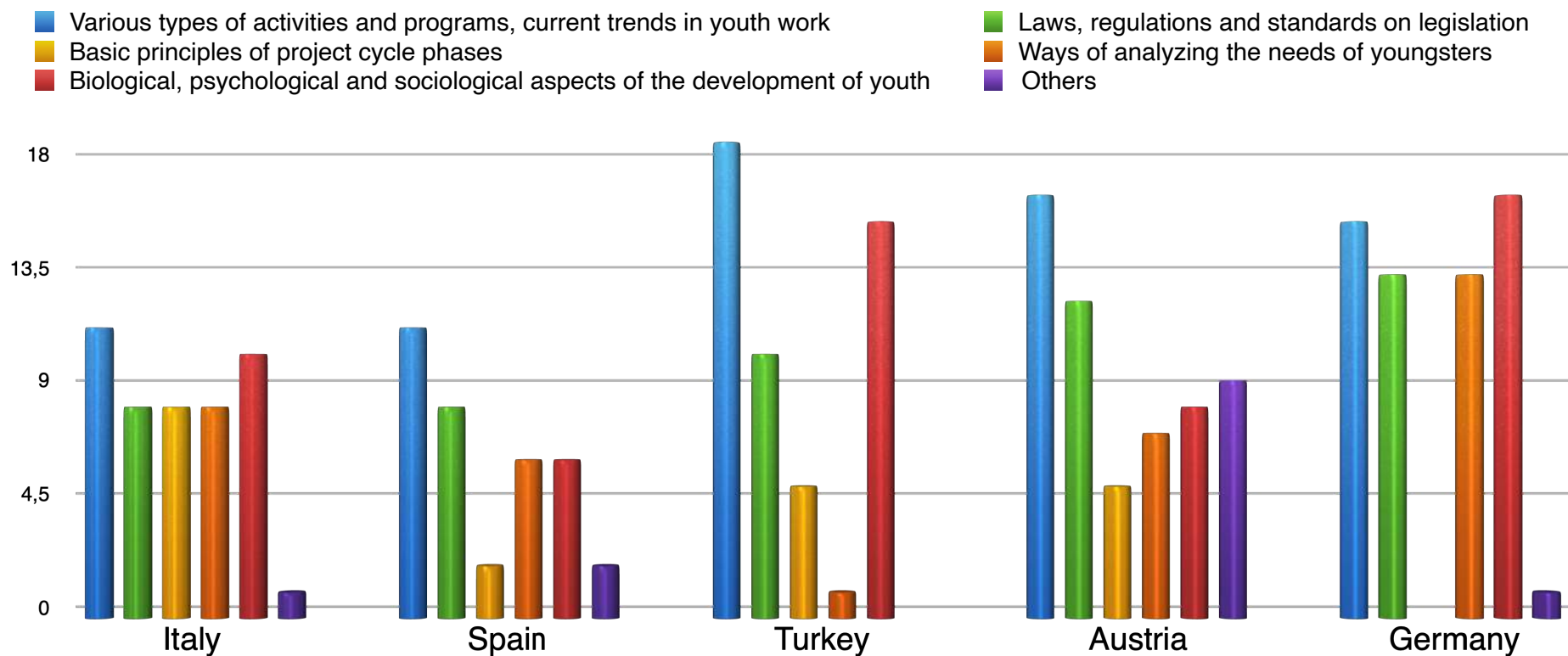




[Mentions under “Others”: Develop communication methods (Turkey), Creativity (Spain); Inspire enthusiasm, digital competence, structured thinking, organisational talent, respect, mental stability (Austria).]

Of course, these personal requirements and attitudes can only be conveyed to a limited extent in training and further education measures, but they do point to the importance of a basic **ethical stance** which must underlie all measures.

What concrete training needs do the respondents identify?





[Concerning Training needs, mentions under “Others”: New methodologies (Spain) Dealing with aggressive behaviour, media and digital competence (Austria); career guidance skills, professional counselling of youngsters (Germany).]

The graph above shows that the interest is particularly focused on activities, programmes and current trends in youth work. In second place are legal regulations. Biological, psychological and sociological developments in adolescence are also mentioned, but with national differences: The majority of German and Austrian respondents are interested, Turkish and Spanish participants less so. Administrative areas such as project planning, on the other hand, are of less interest to participants - with the exception of Italy. In the case of youth needs analyses, interests are wide apart: very high among German participants and particularly low among Turkish participants.

Austrian participants in particular attach great additional importance to training in digital competence.

## 3.2 Results of focus group discussions with youth workers

### 3.2.1 Profile of Target groups

The **target groups** of most of the respondents in all five partner countries are **considerably diverse**, in dependence from their respective organisation. Many of the interviewees work with **mixed groups**, where young people with **various forms of disadvantage are often in the majority**, but not always. Not all offers are exclusively aimed at and used by disadvantaged young people. In some institutions (especially in the open youth work of NGOs in Germany and Austria) disadvantaged young people are overrepresented, whereas in the youth work of clubs and associations they are often in the minority.

#### What difficulties and challenges do the respondents face in their daily work?

As already made clear from specialist literature and document analyses in chapter 2.3 youth workers face **numerous challenges**, often resulting from the framing conditions in their countries, but also depending on their specific target groups with disadvantaged background.

In the discussions with youth workers, further concrete issues working with disadvantaged youth were mentioned. The results however vary considerably in comprehensiveness: In some focus groups participants only hinted at problems, others reported in great detail.

In **Italy**, the drastic **reduction in public funding** has a particularly negative impact on daily youth work. These cuts are accompanied by a **lack of public recognition**, together with the challenge for disadvantaged target groups to achieve a sense of social self-determination in overcoming personal and social barriers. According to a representative EU report on the participation of **young people with fewer opportunities** in specific programmes in Italy, the vast majority of them are

confronted with economic and social problems, only a comparatively small proportion with disability or illness.<sup>32</sup> This suggests that such difficulties can only be solved to a certain extent through youth work and particularly require political measures.

In Spain many of the professionals emphasised the language barrier present at times, as well as the lack of compromise and motivation from young people to participate in the activities. Some pointed out the importance of the differences in age and learning levels, as well as the learning barriers and behavioural disorders that some youngsters may suffer from. In addition it was mentioned the problem of lacking documents or uncertain residence status, which made their mission to help these young people more complex. For their part, professionals listed the lack of economic resources, training opportunities (or complicated access to them), a lack of time to work with their target groups, and limitations among the working team as some of their own obstacles.

And as already mentioned above there was to be observed a stigmatisation of unemployed youngsters by adults in Spanish society after the financial crisis of 2008. This could be one of the reasons why young people do not find the motivation and enthusiasm to take part in the projects and activities that youth workers offer. They wish to be treated with the same respect as adults, and they need to feel that there is real support. Another reason that can explain this lack of interest is hopelessness. Young people do not feel that youth work projects or trainings are going to provide something for them that will be useful or recognised professionally. Moreover, they do not believe that their involvement in these projects can ultimately change their personal situations.

The participants of focus groups of Turkey also stated that they often encounter problems in motivating youngsters to be involved in the activities of the organisation regularly and in arranging suitable dates that enable more youngsters to take part. Furthermore they mention the difficulties of finding or applying appropriate methods aimed at young people with social, cultural and family barriers and of creating cohesion between young people who have problems in their lives

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<sup>32</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/sites/erasmusplus/files/youth-inclusion-diversity-strategy\\_it.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/sites/erasmusplus/files/youth-inclusion-diversity-strategy_it.pdf) [last checked 4/2020].

that need to be overcome and other participants. It was also mentioned the fact, that due to the regularly high number of visitors to the centres, it may be that youth workers do not always recognise young people having a **disadvantaged background** and being in need for special support.

The **economic anxiety** of these young people causes further difficulties for youth workers to reach them and involve them in their activities. Because the **main concern** of disadvantaged young people is not finding entrepreneurship, youth activities or visiting another country, but **finding a job** and **gaining economic freedom** as soon as possible.

Informal education outside school is an important task, but it requires **materials and resources** that are often lacking. **NGOs** have to **cope with shortages**. In addition, youth workers face the following **challenges** in their daily practice:

- The fact that young people cannot be reached easily to the activity area (free transportation)
- Not reaching each region equally (Opportunity inequality)
- Free food, materials and resources
- Old technologies
- Inadequate support staff
- Inadequacies in physical environments (Warming, Light, suitability of space for effectiveness, etc.).

Several participants from the focus group in [Austria](#) confirm the obstacles and challenges for youth work as already mentioned in chapter 2.3. Furthermore the respondents named [personal obstacles](#), such as language barriers, drug problems, lack of motivation, reliability or accessibility and psychological problems, aggression or resignation. On the other hand, there are [systemic barriers](#) that cannot be solved on an individual level because they are [based on structural discrimination](#): insecure residence permits, no access to education or to the labour and housing market and many others. One interviewee vividly describes these [multi-dimensional problem situations](#) in which many disadvantaged young people find themselves:

*"Young people want training but have no access, no entitlement (residence), no resources to bring what is required of them. No economic support. No income, no housing, language courses cost money, sleeping in garages is punished - punishment, stay in prison ... Cycle!"*

One respondent complains that many [structures and approaches](#) in the youth field are [outdated](#), that a large number of young people are subjects of ["over-therapy"](#): "For years the clients are in a permanent state of a victim and this in turn has negative effects. Both the teenagers and the mothers, who are currently under psychological guidance, remain stuck in their victim role."

Another interview partner states: "Frustration tolerance is demanded of me. As a youth worker, you need a thick skin or a protective armour."

Eventually [cuts in funding](#) are also mentioned, but not in the first place.

The focus groups in [Germany](#) have reported in great detail on hurdles in working with disadvantaged young people. Because these reports provide an exemplary and lively [insight into the complex and demanding practice](#), which certainly do not only apply to Germany, they are presented in full below. Perhaps some of these issues are identified in other partner countries as well, without having explicitly mentioned it. Other aspects might reflect the specific situation of work



with disadvantaged youth in Germany. [General obstacles and challenges](#) that were mentioned by the interview partners are:

- Fights and conflicts among youngsters. Youth workers spend a lot of time resolving fights, solving conflicts, and building team/group spirit. Such fights can also be trigger points to bring out various forms of hate speech. In the heat of the moment youngsters use e.g. racist or sexual vocabulary with the aim to hurt their opponent.
- Lack of reliability – depending on the youth program, youngsters take over specific roles in activities (e.g. in sports, in choir, in scouting etc.) The whole group is then depending on the youngster being reliable (e.g. attending training/rehearsals, showing up for competitions). If they do not show up, the facilitator/youth worker has to calm the anger and frustration of the whole group.
- Not following rules or even engage in illegal activities.
- Economical barriers for financially disadvantages youngsters to join youth programs.

The interviewees engaged in a [employability project for NEETs](#) in Germany voiced the following [specific challenges](#) that come with a project that is not just leisure time but a directive learning and development program:

- Getting them interested and keeping their interest level high. It is a challenge to keep them engaged. You need to create a good and relaxed atmosphere and motivate them a lot.
- Getting youngsters to perform tasks and deliver results that are required of them within the framework of the project (e.g. writing a CV, preparing a cover letter, researching companies to send applications to)
- One of the trainers mentioned that it is more challenging to train such a group of youngsters than adults. They still engage in a lot of arguments and fights among each other. You cannot treat them like children, but they also don't behave like adults. You need to do a lot of conflict management.

- One participant mentioned that counselling of youngsters in this employability project was more challenging than counselling adults. They need to be taken seriously and you are not supposed to give them direct advice. You should rather support them in finding their own way and empower them to use their own resources. Instead sometimes you have the impulse to use your own life and professional experience, and to just tell them what to do. Our participant is convinced that the attitude in which you lead and counsel them is decisive for their development.

Finally the respondents from [professional youth welfare sector](#) reported further [obstacles](#):

- If youngsters are not willingly living in the youth welfare institution but are ordered to live there by the state, they often refuse to cooperate because they want to go home. They do not understand the reasons for their placement. It is very hard to explain to them that cooperation is a big chance for them that can bring many benefits to their entire future life.
- Within the youth welfare institutions all youngsters usually are counselled or receive some kind of therapy. Often when youngsters are placed in such institutions they already have years of therapy experience from their past that they had to do before getting taken out of their families. Such youngsters are often reluctant to cooperate because they feel that they cannot be helped anyways. Due to former neglect or any kind of abuse, the youngsters are often very suspicious towards adults. They have learned not to rely on adults but to somehow stand on their own two legs. It is hard for them to build trust, to let themselves be “children” again and give up some responsibility but on the other hand also to accept the rules and structures in such an institution. Children between 9 and 13 with such a background are the hardest “to reach” because they do think in (illogic) patterns that are very hard to comprehend for adults and therefore to treat. Children around 14 and older can rather be convinced by logic arguments that can pass over on the emotional level.
- The youth welfare institutions are – for a certain amount of time - the centre of the youngster’s life, because that is where they live. This also puts the institution in the centre of a network of “stakeholders” in the youngsters lives such as counsellors, educators and therapists in the institution (which do currently have the most contact with the

youngsters), state youth welfare organisation (which decides over the stay of the youngster in the institution and requests frequent reports), parents/family and school. It is a challenge to balance the interests of all those parties while always prioritizing the best outcome for the child.

- The German school system – it is very bureaucratic, stringent and deadlocked. If you do work with children that have not been in school for various years it is almost impossible to get them back in the regular school system.
- For youth welfare institutions it is a big problem when a resident youngster turns 18. As long as the youngsters are not yet of age they are protected by the German Social Security Code. Also the funding for their stay in the youth welfare institute is regulated there. As soon as they turn 18, they are not part of this system anymore and it is very, very complicated to continue their stay – for example until they finish school. Usually they have to get out and then they are on their own.



### 3.2.2 The importance of youth work for social inclusion of youngsters with disadvantaged background

There is a broad consensus on this: youth work provides an important contribution to inclusion - both in relation to society and to each individual. [Integration](#) or better [Inclusion](#) should be understood primarily as [participation](#), as a [means of emancipation](#), [involvement](#) and [self-determination](#) of each individual in society.

According to the [Italian](#) country report [Working with young people: the value of youth work in the European Union \(2014\)](#)<sup>33</sup>, the organisations that deliver youth work in Italy share broad youth work values, which include:

- Youth work should not be seen only as a way to provide instruments for the labour market;
- Youth workers do not have to work only with problematic young people, they have to accompany and support all the young people in exploiting their potential;
- Youth workers have to support the active participation of youth in the activities carried out at local level.

This [open and diversity oriented approach](#) is an aspect that we will elaborate on later (cf. chapter 4).

The focus group participants in [Spain](#) underlined [educational aspects](#) of youth work: Young people from 18-30 are in a period of their lives when they can absorb the most information and learning is easier, so [youth work](#) becomes a really [integrative factor](#) in a society that is very individualistic. In addition, their [own participation](#) is very important for the [participation of their families](#) and other children in their communities. It is essential to work with people in that age range to get them out of their daily routines, change their bad habits to give them a chance to get the education or career they want to pursue, and teach them how to be more empathetic, human and realistic. Finally, [youth work fights against inequality](#) in order to offer the same opportunities to everyone, which helps youngsters with disadvantaged background to feel integrated in society. The projects and activities organised by public and private institutions often have an important impact on young people. The support provided by youth workers can affect both their [personal and professional lives](#).

The majority of respondents in [Austria](#) stress the extremely positive effect of youth work in its [low-threshold open access](#). Here, the young people encounter an open, [tolerant context](#), and can thus encounter each other more unprejudiced. The stronger the [social stability](#), the more secure the young people feel in their environment and society.

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<sup>33</sup> <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/9276/e09d1bf094ebbc0895977ee5eca0be41c87e.pdf> [last checked 4/2020].

They acquire the competence to **realize** their personal **goals and dreams**. Here the young people have a contact point for questions and problems, it provides **guidance** and **orientation** in difficult life situations and carries out an important **work of prevention**.<sup>34</sup>

The participants in **Germany** give insight into the resources and potentials of youth work to develop social competences and teach values. Specific points that were mentioned are:

- Youth work teaches reliability. The organizations providing youth work do have stable, reliable structures and youngsters learn to take over roles and responsibilities and experience how important it is to fulfill them.
- Youth work has the opportunity to create open meeting spaces for interaction of youngsters from diverse backgrounds. They might be diverse regarding their heritage, religion, up-bringing, social status, values, believes ... Within youth work those differences should not matter anymore. It should rather be a space to discover similarities and common interests despite all the differences.
- Youth work offers the chance for peer learning among the youngsters. They experience that they can learn something from everyone, explore their own interests – regardless of any disadvantages.
- Building a team spirit and a sense of understanding and cohesion. Youngsters learn to depend on others and to be part of a functioning group.
- In a small and protected environment youngsters learn to accept and play by the rules which they benefit from in the future.

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<sup>34</sup> Since the original question was about the “Importance of youth work for the integration of disadvantaged young people”, one participant of the focus group rightly remarks: "The question is not quite clear. Integration into what?" And another stated: Youth work makes an important contribution to integration, or rather to "endure society". These responses refer to the need to consider integration not as a one-way process, but in terms of structural integration and participation, as already described in Chapter 1.4.

- Youngsters with disadvantages can find other people with same interests and values. They get a chance to build new relationships outside of the rigid structure of schools.

The professional [youth welfare sector in Germany](#) is specifically focused on [creating equal opportunities](#) in life for children/youngsters with disadvantages. Independent life is to be understood in this context to give them the chance to live a [self-determined, happy life](#) in which they do not need to have existential fears. They get the chance to [finish school](#), get some [vocational training](#), to [take up a job](#) to pay for their living without being dependent on state welfare anymore. The children and youngsters in youth welfare institutions do not come from family and social backgrounds that can provide those chances for them. In their stage of development youngsters are still way more impressionable than adults. Therefore there is a relevant chance to develop their attitudes, values, morals, outlook on life in a sustainable way for the future.

### 3.2.3 Basic elements contributing to successful youth work

**Spain:** The elements considered to make up successful youth work are diverse. Some of them are their [own compromise](#) with the activities that they are doing and the organisation they are working with, [empathy](#), and the [ability to actually listen](#) to young people's problems, struggles, and goals in order to make them feel important so they can feel safe with youth workers. Apart from these, it is also important that they have [knowledge in conflict resolution](#) in case it is needed, [being passionate](#) about the work that they do, and trusting young people's chances to success. In relation to the youngsters themselves, it is also essential for them to [feel motivated](#) in what they are doing, as the lack of motivation can affect them and the professionals that work with them. It is also important that they [value team work](#) and are [optimistic](#) about their possible achievements, but still [keep their expectations](#) realistic so that they can be successful step by step.

The question about [good practices and methods that they use](#) in youth work results in a wide variety of examples of practices that the different interviewees apply to their work. A good practice explained by a person that works in a centre for young immigrant minors who have entered the country illegally is [positive reinforcement](#). These [youngsters get 'rewards'](#) for doing things correctly: more pocket money, more time outside of the centre, more time to use their phones, etc. Another person stated that having [guests in their workshops](#) that [tell their life stories](#) related to [following their dreams](#) or their [migration process](#) inspire and encourage young people to do the same.

In the end, they need to try different methods and tactics after studying their target group and give them a try. As one of the interviewees illustrated, working in this field might make you feel hopeless at times; however, looking back you know that your job is very gratifying, even in case of small successes.

**Turkey:** The respondents further reported that they regularly carry out [various surveys](#) regarding their target groups (such as what their purpose or motivation is to apply to the youth centre) in order to get to know the participants that they will work with. These kinds of [questionnaires](#) enable them to [identify youngsters' needs and interests](#) to be able to create the most suitable environment for them and carry out activities considering their needs. One of the [main methods](#) of youth work should be regular communication by [using social media](#) to [follow the trends in youngsters' life](#) and learn their agenda [to update the tools](#) used working with the youngsters.

From the respondents in [Austria](#) the word "[relationship work](#)" is used here repeatedly. This also requires [low-threshold offers](#), [acceptance](#), [respect](#) and [openness](#) as well as [social empathy](#), understanding for the life worlds of the young people. But also [critical thinking](#) and the ability to deal [with conflicts](#) are considered important. [Clear rules](#) and limits must be set, a [structured daily routine](#). But regular [further training](#), [supervision](#), mutual support, exchange and good team leadership are also very important for the institution.



The **German** participants described a whole range of **elements for successful youth work**:

- When working with youngsters there should always be an element of fun involved. People in this field should be able to lighten up situations, not to be too serious or harsh.
- Youth workers should be able to react flexibly on the dynamics of a group. They need to have the ability to recognize when interventions are needed.
- A very important element of successful youth work is the ability to adapt or adjust your own language and choice of words to the group of youngsters you are working with. This is very context dependent. Sometimes it might be necessary to create distance and demonstrate hierarchy (e.g. in training situations) while in other cases it might be necessary to become part of the youth culture and their language to get a message across.
- Youth workers should create an environment in which youngsters get responsibilities. This teaches them to be reliable and dependable. For youth workers it can be a balancing between challenging a youngster to become better by giving him/her responsibility or overwhelming them by putting too much responsibility and pressure on them.
- Successful youth work contains a competence development aspect. This does not mean that it should be a training situations. But youth work should inspire youngsters for the future. It should try to develop team spirit, trustworthiness, good group dynamics, understanding and acceptance of diversity.
- Successful youth work should teach values. For example respect for other people regardless of their origin, social background, generations and so on, respect for animals, protection of the environment.
- Good youth work should contain a sound conflict management with conflict and problem solving strategies.
- A youth worker needs to be an authentic person to be accepted and respected by the youngster they work with.

- Youth work should provide a stable and reliable environment with clear rules and structures for disadvantaged youth. Key is not necessarily the content of the rules but rather the clear communication and dependable atmosphere for youngsters.
- Speech rules for a respectful interaction with each other without any racist or sexual phrasings that youngsters often use without thinking about the real meaning of the words that they are using.
- Disadvantaged youngsters should not be seen or treated as such. They should be treated like everyone else. The focus mustn't lie on their disadvantage but on their competences and resources. They do not “need to be helped”. Rather they need to be empowered and supported to unfold their strength and reach their full potential.

Professional youth welfare work has some [specific approaches](#) and basic pillars that ensure its success:

- All activities, therapies, interventions and so on should always be based in the individual needs of the youngsters. This requires a professional assessment and in some cases also psychological diagnostic of the youngsters.
- People in professional youth welfare should always reflect their own decisions and activities with the youngsters – ideally not just by doing self-reflection but rather within the team or via supervision.
- The institution needs to provide a professional, well organized and structured program for the youngsters for their leisure time. It is not enough to just create an open space for them. There should be dependable leisure activities. Youngsters in such institutions do need clear and dependable structures to be able to gain trust and feel save.



### 3.2.4 Tools and services that would help to promote youngsters with disadvantaged background

The professionals interviewed in [Spain](#) gave different responses:

- Socio-cultural aspects. Some of the answers gave ideas like getting to know other cultures, giving society the chance to get to know young migrants without prejudices. Other possibilities include organizing workshops for social inclusion where people with special needs or less opportunities can participate, as well as interacting with young people from different backgrounds, not just those who live in their same neighbourhoods.
- Public institutions. Many interviewees consider that there is a need for better policies and that public institutions need to be more involved. Their help, either providing a space where they can work or financial funds would be very appreciated among youth workers. Others state that the current legislation could be improved, as it does not provide for example the protection that migrant youngsters need.
- Communication and activities. There needs to be more information about the resources in the area and the values that organisations in these areas share so that they can reach more people together and give them the help that they need. The professionals think integration and mediation can be achieved with group and leisure activities like sports or theatre.
- Education and employability. Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds need more chances for their integration and their subsequent education and training in order to be employed. Education needs to be promoted among migrant youngsters, offering funds or paid traineeships to improve their employability, as well as helping those who do not have the support of their families with housing when they turn 18 and need to take over their lives.

In the report from [Turkey](#) particular attention was paid to [training needs for youth workers](#) in different areas: From this point of view, the trainings and activities are to [develop the professional quality of youth services](#). They should

contribute to: guide young people more efficiently, exhibit a learning-based approach in volunteer management, save time and labour, take a young-friendly approach. So, what training is needed from this point of view?

Youth Participation and Youth Policy	Training on Coping with a Difficult Situation
Developmental Features of Young People	Erasmus + Training Course
Conflict Management Training	Social Media Education
Training on Nonviolent Communication	Advocacy and Lobbying Training
Participation, Solidarity and Equality	Civil Society and Volunteering Education
Sustainable Peace Education	Social Gender Education
Leader and Teamwork Training	Youth and Social Rights Education

From the [Austrian](#) focus group came several references to [financial support](#), but also to the desire for more [recognition](#) and reporting [by the media and politicians](#) in order to raise [awareness](#) of this issue [in society](#). More campaigns and institutions that promote [vocational and training opportunities for young people](#). More openness on the part of companies, also towards disadvantaged young people. A "[pre-stage](#)" before the start of working life, where young people are given the opportunity to start their careers with less pressure. More [free offers](#) for young people (German courses, tutoring, legal advice etc.) But also more [promotion and recognition of youth work](#), which carried out by [Muslims and migrants](#) and their organisations. This is by the way an area that is given far too little attention in society, mostly even viewed with suspicion by officials.

And one respondent who probably cannot stand for the majority of youth workers says: "I am blessed with enough resources in my field."

**Germany:** Regarding tools and services to promote youngsters with disadvantages **mainly financial resources** were mentioned. Usually the financial means are very restricted and also bound for specific activities. Some funds that can be flexibly allocated could be very helpful for youth organisations.

- Financial resources for therapeutic offers that exceed the funds provided by the health insurances
- Financial resources for leisure activities, excursions ...
- Rooms and facilities for youth offers
- Creation of more paid jobs for professional youth/social workers
- Better networking between official bodies for easier access to disadvantaged youngsters, to help them. E.g. networking between school social workers, family workers, street workers, youth centres, state youth welfare organisation ...

#### 3.2.4 Proven tools and good practices that are used in current daily youth work

The focus group in **Italy** collected many experience-based suggestions about how better interact and have a real impact working not only with young people with fewer opportunities but with youngsters general:

- To make them understand the importance of the activity, to make it attractive and to be ready to unpredictable reaction and to improvise;
- To support their spontaneous critical/creative thinking and to give input instead of definitions;
- To have an equal standing approach as much as possible;

- To show interest in their interests, tools and languages/ slang/ terminologies;
- To let them feel listened.

So, in general youth workers need to be trained on soft skills such as active listening, cultural awareness and sensitivity, inter-generational issues, new media and tools such as social media and ICT.

**Turkey:** As already mentioned above, the respondents reported that they regularly carry out [various surveys](#) regarding their target groups (such as what their purpose or motivation is to apply to the youth centre) in order to get to know the participants that they will work with. These kinds of [questionnaires](#) enable them to [identify youngsters' needs and interests](#) to create a suitable environment for them and carry out activities considering their needs. They also consider it important to communicate with their participants by using social media to follow trends in young people's lives and to learn their priorities in order to update the tools used in working with young people.

The focus group of [Austria](#) named the following methods and good practices: [Individual case discussions](#), in which intensive and goal-oriented work with young people can be carried out, as well as [thematic workshops](#) have proven to be effective. Methods of [life-world-oriented](#) social work (genogram).<sup>35</sup> Community work, social space work, [low-threshold street work](#). Moreover [feedback discussions](#) with young people, open debates. [Team-teaching](#) with colleagues, systematic interventions and procedures. Meditation exercises, relaxation exercises. Change of perspective, supervision, intervision (collegial advice) and reflection. Creating crisis guidelines and crisis plans. And again and again: ["relationship work"](#).

Further mentioned in the Austrian focus group was the importance [of youth work of migrants](#) and their organisations. Respondents call for [more support](#) of youth work carried out by [Muslims and migrants](#). Open youth groups should have more mentors and social workers who themselves have either a [refugee or migrant background](#).

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<sup>35</sup> A form of presentation of kinship relations, which is mainly used in systemic family therapy to present and evaluate family relationships, recurring constellations and their history.

Finally, we asked our interview partners in Austria about their [ideas and visions for future youth work](#). That youth work needs more [resources](#), but also more [appreciation in society](#) is probably an expectation that is commonly shared. It was also considered particularly necessary to gain much more [insight into the digital world](#) of young people in order to be able to act where young people can be reached. It would also be desirable to have many [more craft and artistic offerings](#). And all this at eye level - without a raised forefinger!

Finally one of the interview partners stated: "Because I like the term very much, I have the ideal image of an intercultural society."

The [German](#) focus group participants mentioned the following concrete tools and good practices, which provide further interesting ideas and inspirations:

- Applied Storytelling - this is a narrative method by which explicit, but above all implicit knowledge is passed on in the form of symbols, metaphors or other means of rhetoric. Storytelling is a means for sharing and interpreting experiences.
- Any kind of group activities and games. In general they support group cohesion.
- Providing opportunities to create common experiences. E.g. tours or excursions to bring people together outside of their usual environment to broaden the horizon and give new impressions.
- Create situations of contrast – bring together people from different origins, different generations, different social backgrounds ... The goal is to broaden youngsters' horizon and let them discover similarities despite initially noticed differences.
- Peer-to-peer education
- Empower and involve not only the youngsters but their families. Try to make sure that parents are informed about the work you are doing with their child and try to bring them on board, get them involved, to be supportive.



- Work with animals (e.g. therapy dogs or horse riding therapy). Youngsters learn a lot about respectful interaction when dealing with animals because animals show their own limits very clearly and in case of disregard also enforce them.
- Always communicate in a non-judgmental way. Take the needs and worries of youngsters serious.
- Leading by being a good example.
- Always keep your professional distance to protect yourself and the youngsters.

The German respondents propose a **systemic counselling approach**. This approach does not focus on deficits but on **strength and potentials**. It also supports a strong **behavioural orientation** to initiate change.

One of the pillars in the professional youth welfare sector is to work with a participatory approach. This approach consists of 4 levels of participation that you can grant to the youngsters.

- **Information** – you inform them about any kind of decision that somehow affects them.
- **Listening** – you listen to the wishes and ideas of youngsters regarding a certain topic, but you still decide independently if or if not to consider their input.
- **Co-determination** – you set a specific framework in which you go through a decision making process together with the youngsters – e.g. by giving them options to pick from or you find a consensus together with the youngsters
- **Self-deciding** – You give all the power and responsibility over certain tasks to the youngsters themselves.

By using this participatory approach youngsters feel informed, empowered, taken seriously and self-determined. This approach should always be chosen – and if it is only on the lowest level “Information”.



# Conclusion and Outlook: Assessment from a diversity approach perspective

04



The previous chapters have given an insight into the specifics of youth work in the different countries: their national frameworks, the challenges for youth workers, possible training needs and many ideas and inspirations by proven methods and good practices from youth and social workers participating as experts in the focus groups in Italy, Spain, Turkey, Austria and Germany.

It has become clear that the framework conditions and practices differ considerably. While in Italy and Spain "youth work" is still a relatively unknown concept, lacking official support and recognition, the situation in Turkey has improved considerably in recent years, but youth work there is based less on voluntary work than on governmental, public institutions. In Austria and Germany, by contrast, forms of youth work with disadvantaged groups are structurally widespread and differentiated. Besides public institutions and associations, there is a broad network of information services, youth centres and offers of open youth work.

The situation of disadvantaged youth also varies due to the national conditions of education, labour market and so on. While the rate of NEET youth is about 25% or more in Spain, Italy or Turkey it is statistically less than 6% in Germany or Austria. But even in better-off countries, the group of "disadvantaged youth", which includes various factors for discrimination, is seen as much larger. Studies in Germany and Austria also assume about 25%, using a broader concept of disadvantage (as outlined in chapter 1.4).

The **difficulties in daily activities** in youth work arise on the one hand from **national conditions** outlined in chapter 2 above, on the other hand from **the specifics of the organisations** and **target groups** that are considerably diverse.

- For this reason, it seems particularly important to develop **cross-target group measures** that take this **diversity** into account.

Another aspect is that **informal resources and competences** that young people bring with them are often not recognised or acknowledged in society, especially in countries such as Germany or Austria, where formal certificates play a major role. In some countries, such as Turkey or Arab countries, the form of dual vocational training is less known. Occupations are often learned informally, knowledge and skills are acquired through "learning by doing". Refugees and young migrants, for example, then often lack the obligatory qualifications and certificates to practise a profession or pursue a career in Germany or Austria, while in Turkey or other countries they may find faster access to the labour market. But also **"soft skills"** such as competences and experiences **arising from migration**, transnational networks and multilingualism, coping with life crisis and upheaval must be made visible and recognized. In this context, it is also important to give more attention and recognition to the youth work of migrant organisations, which to this day is usually regarded with suspicion by society.

- Therefore, **resource- and lifeworld oriented approaches** are appropriate and helpful.

## 4.1 “The world on the ground”: Youth work in the context of globalization

Globalization and increasingly diversified societies have a significant influence on the challenges and opportunities in youth work. For a better understanding of those challenges and opportunities it is useful to consider this globalised context.

Hardly any economic, cultural or political topic seems to be understood today without its worldwide references. "The World on the ground" (die Welt vor Ort) has become a commonly used metaphor to signal the complex effects of global processes on local daily life. In this context the question arises, what consequences these new developments will have

for people's **everyday lives**, for the local living environment, for individual opportunities and their future prospects. The debate about **opportunities** and risks of these changes has reached a broad public and is increasingly controversial in all social classes, whether in the centre of media attention or in the private sphere.

Digital mass communication, increasing mobility, worldwide standardization of products, the attraction of growing material prosperity and its unequal distribution create opposing trends: of universalization and discrepancy, convergence and levelling. In the everyday life of each individual, however, globalization also means **growing complexity**, the dissolution of fixed structures and certainties. Added to this are current debates on **migration**, the **causes of flight** and **climate change**, which are now at the top of the agenda in all areas of society.

Robertson (1995) introduced the concept of **globalization** as a new perspective of observation.<sup>36</sup> This characterizes locality as a dimension, but not as the opposite of the global. Globalization can only take place with local ties, both sides are in constant interaction. The synthesis, the combination and blending of local and non-local elements at the local level - be it in the urban environment, in youth cultures, in biographies or individual lifestyles - creates new cultural forms and can be considered an **urban resource**.

**Urbanity** is not conceivable without migration. Urban stories are always stories of migration. Immigration was constitutive for the big city development of the 19th and 20th centuries in the developing industrial societies and it still is for the megacities of the 21st century. Cities were and are the primary destinations for immigrants. The city has always had the function of being an arrival city. However, there have always been **controversial interpretations**: Concepts of a diverse culture of urbanity and of migration as a resource of the development of cities compete with those that assume that economic deprivation, cultural diversity and social exclusion are linked to an urban society on the way to disintegration. The latter have long dominated. Only in recent times the insight has grown in social sciences that migration is an essential element of urbanity and urban development.

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<sup>36</sup> Cf. Featherstone/Lash/Robertson 1995, Chapter 2.

## 4.2 Diversity as an opportunity and challenge for youth work: Recommendations and prospects

An important **result from the comparison** of the 5 national reports is the need for **diversity-oriented youth work** that meets the realities and needs of a globalised society. This also requires a **change of perspective**, according to which migration is not seen as an exception but as social normality.

Diversity-oriented youth work is not based on deficits, but on the **resources of young people**, which may include experiences of migration and flight, multilingualism, transnational networks, but also experiences of general life crises and upheaval and personal skills managing them.

In this way, the findings correspond with the **guidelines of the European Commission**, which combines all lines of difference into a whole. This results in an **integrative diversity concept** that can be practiced in different areas: away from a target group-oriented (often deficit-emphasized) perspective to a **cross-target group, resource-oriented diversity approach** that includes all people who experience disadvantage, exclusion and discrimination.

Diversity in this context means a specific life practice that creates new spaces and facilitates learning processes. **This Integrative Diversity Concept**

- connects and mediates between areas that have so far been viewed separately,
- understands diversity as a resource,
- avoids the conventional deficit model,
- understands complex diversity as a challenge for all forms of youth work and
- is pragmatically oriented and based on the realities of young people's lives.



Diversity-oriented youth work is on the one hand acknowledging life experiences and realities and offering young people opportunities to shape their lives. In doing so, young people themselves have to be regarded as **experts of their own life reality**. On the other hand, diversity-oriented youth work involves making **discriminatory structures** visible, helping to dismantle them and working for the realisation of equal opportunities (political dimension).

As a youth worker in the Austrian focus group emphasised, "over-pedagogy" or "over-therapy" of young people should be avoided. Instead of reducing young people to ethnic, national or cultural categories or victim roles, the new concepts are **based on their everyday reality**.

The following points are part of a **diversity-oriented youth work concept**:

- Change of perspective (resources instead of deficits, diversity instead of difference, migration as social normality, globalised living environment)
- Multi-perspective view or holistic concept
- Critical reflection of social power and inequality relations
- Lifeworld orientation
- Social space orientation
- Subject orientation
- Resource orientation
- Thinking together of formal, non-formal and informal learning processes.

The main objective of diversity-based youth work is to **empower young people** and thus to achieve **social participation/inclusion** and **independence from supporting institutions**.

To achieve this, a **change of perspective** in youth work with disadvantaged people is urgently needed. This means not to regard the possible social problems firstly as deviations or "mental deficits", but as an expression of global social change and new challenges.

Young people's social life contexts are reflexively incorporated into the design of youth work. Diversity-oriented youth work must be able to facilitate new approaches, **uncover previously unrecognised resources and competences** and use them for possible intervention. Youth work that does not take young people and their individual life strategies seriously runs the risk of achieving counterproductive effects with its interventions.

However, a change of perspective also means not losing sight of the manifold and **cumulative forms of exclusion**. For an intervention, it is of great importance to pay particular attention to the entanglement and overlapping of different dimensions of inequality (**intersectionality**).



The **findings from the focus groups** of the national studies point to the need for a multi-perspective, reflexive approach:

- Diversity-oriented youth work should take a critical look at its own interpretations and concepts (self-critical attitude). This is a process of making discriminating structures visible and examining one's own images and attributions with the aim of developing a self-critical and socially critical attitude.
- A lifeworld and resource-oriented and thus an appreciative attitude in youth work. The self-description of the young people must be taken seriously and made the starting point for further interventions - without fixing them to a certain identity or interpretation.

- Diversity-oriented youth work that leads young people to empowerment. Young people need spaces in which they can locate themselves in a self-determined way. In the struggle against discrimination and stigmatisation, youth work can strengthen young people, support them in their individual practices and encourage solidarity among them. This is also intended to promote the social and political participation of disadvantaged young people.

In the **further project phases**, training modules will be developed which, on the one hand, offer an introduction to basic skills in youth work and, on the other hand, are intended to introduce this diversity-oriented approach to the practice of youth work across target groups. To this end, online modules and formats of distance learning will also be developed to meet the youth workers' repeatedly expressed need for digital skills and materials.

As emerged from the discussions and interviews with focus groups of the five partner countries, the most **important personal "soft skills"** are respectful communication, empathy and relationship work. But also humor and a kind of tolerance of frustration and ambiguity are required, i.e. the ability to deal calmly with contradictory or uncertain situations. These personal qualities and attitudes can only be conveyed to a limited extent in training courses, but the **change of perspective** as described above, an orientation towards **resources instead of deficits**, can provide a suitable frame for youth work in a changing world.

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# Appendix

06

## Annex: The Template for the Desk Research

### IO1/A1 - Desk Research

1. The Introduction
2. The methodology
3. Analysis on current situation of young people having disadvantaged background and needs of youth workers working with youngsters with disadvantaged background
  - 3.1. Framework of youth work in your country
  - 3.2. What is the profile of youth workers in your country?
  - 3.3. What are the national strategies for youth work and priorities of the national policies on youth work?
  - 3.4. Tools and initiatives support for empowerment of youth workers working with disadvantaged background?
  - 3.5. Types of organisations including in youth work and activities of organisations carrying out youth work?
  - 3.6. What are the national results of youth work?
  - 3.7. Main challenges of youth worker who work with youngsters having disadvantaged background in their daily implementation
  - 3.8. Current situation on participation of youngsters with disadvantaged background into youth work, if there is, explain problems and integration issues about their participation
  - 3.9. Further suggestion in terms of training needs for youth workers working with disadvantaged background
4. Please describe 2 Good Practices on youth work aimed at youngsters having disadvantaged background in your country, using one table below for each good practice.

## Good Practice

Name/Title of Good Practice/project/ National, regional or local	
Year of Good practice	
Promoting organisation/institution	
Analyse the good practice considering cultural, generational or gender issues.	
What are the main activities delivered during the good practice?	
Main Achievements obtained by the good practice	
References	

## Annex: Guideline and Questions for the Focus Groups

### Guideline for Focus Groups

- Focus-groups with youth workers or social workers will take in each partner country to discuss their needs and challenges working with youngsters having disadvantaged background.
- Tools needed: Attendance sheet, consent form, participants' information sheet, list of questions, recorder, note pad, pen.
- Duration of each focus group: 1,5 hours
- Ideally, the focus groups should be coordinated by two experts:
  - The focus group leader will manage the discussion and will ask the questions;
  - The focus group expert will take notes of everything is said during the meeting, by each participant.
- Partners in the focus group should sign the participants list (the structure for signature list is attached, but the project logo will be added)
- Moderators should remind the participants in the focus group of the rules for a better discussion,
  - Speak aloud and one by one to make the recording clearer
  - Listen to and respect what others say and their opinions, as there are not right or wrong answers
  - It is possible to change your mind, without any concern to seem inconsistent
  - Do not worry to express your opinions, even when they contrast with what others have said –The aim of the focus group is not to get an agreement between you all, so different points of view on the same issue as well as both positive and negative comments are welcome
  - It is important to stay pertinent to the issues we are discussing

## Annex: Participant Information Sheet (to be filled by all the participants in the focus group)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Age:

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Gender:

☐ Female ☐ Male

3. Country of origin / nationality:

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What is the age of young people you work with?

☐ 15-18 years ☐ 19-24 years old ☐ Other, please specify

5. Position:

☐ Youth worker ☐ Social Worker

6. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- ☐ High school      ☐ Vocational      ☐ Bachelor's degree      ☐ Master's degree      ☐ Other, please specify

7. The type of the organization you work in

- ☐ NGO      ☐ Public organization      ☐ Informal groups      ☐ Other, please specify

8. How long have you been working in this field?

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9. Please name 5 activities that you do most in your daily task at work?

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10. Did you have any training or course related to your field?

- ☐ Yes      ☐ No

11. Please select all competences that a youth worker and social workers should have

- ☐ Analyzing and solve the problems
- ☐ Digital literacy
- ☐ Communication
- ☐ Ability to express themselves
- ☐ Flexibility in thinking
- ☐ Teamwork
- ☐ Leadership
- ☐ Planning of work
- ☐ Decision making
- ☐ other, please specify

12. Please evaluate the skills and abilities that you need in your work

- ☐ Commitment to young people
- ☐ The ability to provide reliable support and tools to young people according to their needs
- ☐ Resilience
- ☐ Respect
- ☐ Patience, tolerance and flexibility
- ☐ The ability to treat young people's concerns with understanding



- ☐ The ability to establish good relationship with young people
- ☐ Having an interest in or ability to attract the volunteers' interest
- ☐ other, please specify

13. Are you aware of initiatives and policies in your country addressing these issues?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

14. In order to have better professional skills and more effective in your field, do you need to get further training opportunities?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

15. If yes, on which field you need training as a youth worker or social worker?

- ☐ various types of activities and programs used in youth work current trends in youth work
- ☐ laws, regulations and standards on legislation
- ☐ basic principles of project cycle phases
- ☐ ways of analyzing the needs of youngsters
- ☐ biological, psychological and sociological aspects of the development of the development of youth
- ☐ other, please specify

## Annex: Focus Group Questions

### Focus Group Structure and Key Questions

Moderators start focus group with welcome message and general introduction to the aims of the focus group, and then ask for the participants to introduce themselves by turns briefly.

#### Questions

1. What is the profile of the target group that you are working with (their social, educational and vocational background)?
2. What kind of obstacles do you face working with your target group?
3. Why do you think youth work is so important to promote integration of youngsters having disadvantaged background?
4. What do you think of the elements that make up successful youth work?
5. What sort of tools or services would help you to promote youngsters with disadvantaged background?
6. Please describe good practices and methods that you are using in youth work
7. What else do you want to share with the group today?

## Annex: National Report Template

1. Introduction
2. Methodology
3. Literature Review
  - 3.1. Brief provision of Analysis on current situation of young people having disadvantaged background and needs of youth workers working with youngsters with disadvantaged background,
  - 3.2. Brief description of Good Practices on youth work aimed at youngsters having disadvantaged background in the country,
  - 3.3. Analysis of the current local and national situation of disadvantaged youngsters.
  - 3.4. Main challenges of youth worker who work with youngsters having disadvantaged background in their daily implementation,
  - 3.5. Current tools and methodology that youth workers and social workers use by working with disadvantaged youngsters to promote their integration
  - 3.6. Suggested tools or services to promote youth workers and social workers working with youngsters having disadvantaged background
4. Support and Integration needs of youth workers (analysis of Participants List Sheet and focus groups with youth workers and social workers)

### Analysis of Participants List Sheet

- a) Participants' characteristics (Age, Gender, Country of origin / nationality)

- b) Participants' professional background (the highest level of education they have completed, year of experience in their position)
- c) Information on their position (What is the age of young people they work with, the type of the organization you work, 5 activities that they do most in their daily task at work in, if they have had any training or course related to their field)
- d) Current competences that a youth worker and social workers and vocational needs
- e) Good practices and methods that they are using in youth work
- f) Their awareness on initiatives and policies in your country addressing these issues.
- g) For better professional skills and more effective in your field, their training needs

#### Analysis of focus groups with youth workers and social workers

- a) Profile of the target group that you are working with (their social, educational and vocational background)?
- b) Obstacles they face working with their target group
- c) The importance of youth work for better integration of youngsters having disadvantaged background
- d) The elements that make up successful youth work
- e) Tools or services that would help to promote youngsters with disadvantaged background
- f) Good practices and methods that they are using in youth work

- 5. National Level Recommendations
- 6. References



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