

ID TALKS!

This series of ID Talks is dedicated to social justice and youth work. They reflect on humanistic theories, discuss the type of society we live in now, and what kind of reality we want to create for our common future.



ID Talks:

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND BEING HUMAN
SOCIAL JUSTICE AND YOUTH WORK
SOCIAL JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS
SOCIAL JUSTICE AND ACTIVISM
SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EDUCATION

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ABOUT SALTO

...‘Support and **A**dvanced **L**earning and **T**raining **O**pportunities within the Erasmus+: Youth in Action and European Solidarity Corps programmes’. The European Commission has created a network of seven SALTO-YOUTH Resource Centres to enhance the implementation of the EU Erasmus+: Youth in Action and European Solidarity Corps programmes, which provide young people with valuable non-formal learning experiences.

SALTO’s aim is to support the implementation of the European Erasmus+: Youth in Action and European Solidarity Corps Programmes with regard to priorities such as Social Inclusion, Diversity, Participation, and Solidarity. SALTO also supports co-operation with regions such as EuroMed, South-East Europe, or Eastern Europe and The Caucasus and coordinates all training and co-operation activities, as well as information tools for National Agencies.

In these European priority areas, SALTO-YOUTH provides resources, information, and training for National Agencies and European youth workers. Most of these resources are offered and disseminated at www.SALTO-YOUTH.net. Find online the [European Training Calendar](#), the [Toolbox for Training and Youth Work](#), the database of youth field trainers active at the European level ([Trainers Online for Youth or TOY](#)), links to online resources, and much more.

SALTO-YOUTH actively co-operates with other actors in the European youth field, among them the National Agencies of the Erasmus+ and European Solidarity Corps programmes, the Council of Europe, the European Youth Forum, European youth workers and trainers, and training organisers.

THE SALTO-YOUTH INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY RESOURCE CENTRE WWW.SALTO-YOUTH.NET/INCLUSION/

The SALTO-YOUTH Inclusion and Diversity Resource Centre (based in Belgium Flanders) works together with the European Commission to support the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities in the Erasmus+: Youth in Action and European Solidarity Corps programmes. Through that, it works to contribute to social cohesion in society at large. SALTO Inclusion and Diversity also supports the National Agencies and youth workers in their inclusion work by providing training, developing youth work methods, disseminating information via the newsletter, etc. By offering opportunities for training, exchange, and reflection on inclusion practice and diversity management, SALTO Inclusion & Diversity works towards the visibility, accessibility, and transparency of its inclusion & diversity work and resources, and towards making ‘inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities’ and ‘positive diversity management’ a widely supported priority.

For more information and resources, have a look at the Inclusion & Diversity pages at www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/



DISCLAIMER

This magazine contains pictures as a result of the Graphic Recording which is an integral part of all the ID Talks events. There are four types of styles throughout the whole magazine.

- **General Cover Picture.** It is used for promotional reasons throughout the social media channels and the dissemination materials and it depicts the logo of SALTO Inclusion & Diversity, the title, and the graphic elements of each version of the ID Talks events. It is displayed as a cover picture of each ID Talks version.
- **Portrait of Speaker.** It depicts each speaker and a few graphic recording elements such as written parts of their "speech" and/or any other graphics according to the style of each ID Talks version. It is displayed on top of the speaker's description page.
- **Main Graphic Recording Card.** It is used for promotional reasons throughout the social media channels and the dissemination materials and it depicts the logo of SALTO Inclusion & Diversity, the title, and the graphic elements of each version of the ID Talks events, including the specific name of the event, the portrait of the speaker, written quotes of their "speech" and/or any other graphics. It is displayed on top of the first page of each article.
- **Graphic Recording Elements.** Throughout each article, the graphic recording elements complement the text with essential parts of each speaker's "talk".



I & D Talks

“Social Justice”

What is it all about?

“ID Talks” is a series of 5 online workshops on 5 major topics to promote inclusion & diversity (ID) and quality youth work. It features youth workers, professionals and volunteers, from all over the world to share insights, research findings, food for thought, good practices or inspirational stories. They will guide participants through the pressing matters and challenges affecting Inclusion & Diversity and inspire them to make their programmes and organisations more inclusive, embrace human differences, look ahead and picture how the future of youth work and Inclusion & Diversity might be.

Each workshop begins with an input from a guest speaker. Afterwards, participants have the opportunity to engage in the discussion, ask questions and share about their own realities and experiences.

For whom?

- Youth workers, youth leaders, professionals and volunteers involved in ID in the EU youth programmes, as well as all those interested in youth work and inclusion & diversity topics.

Why should you join?

- Get food for thought and learn from inspirational ID stories.
- Learn about ID topics from the youth work sector and beyond.
- Get information, inspiration, methods to help the youth sector address ID.
- Put some more quality in your (international) youth work.
- Identify and learn how to tackle existing and future challenges within ID.



Event Dates:

- 3 September (13h CET) > **ID Talks Social Justice and Being Human (A Tale of Two Sophias):** What does it mean to be human, who is included and who is excluded? What is social justice? How is the world - our environment, technology etc. - shaping today's young people? Let's look into some modern humanist ideals and theories, debate on societal dilemmas and their implications for youth work practice. Guest speaker: **Maria Pisani**, Malta
- 17 September (13h CET) > **ID Talks Social Justice and Youth Work:** How does social justice translate to youth work? What are the different models to ensure access and equity in youth work? Let's talk about the focus of youth work as a value-based profession - should it be about societal change or individual integration? We will examine youth work on the crossroads of individual needs and structural changes. Guest speaker: **Silvia Volpi**, Italy
- 1 October (13h CET) > **ID Talks Social Justice and Human Rights:** How are human rights regarded in today's society? Are there any new concepts and definitions, and how do they reflect the reality of human rights today? What is the role of youth work in promoting, advocating and defining human rights? Let's see how young people are challenging the existing structures, advocating for new issues and breaking existing patterns. Guest speaker: **Neringa Tumėnaitė**, the UK
- 15 October (13h CET) > **ID Talks Social Justice and Activism:** What is (youth) activism and what forms can it take? Why do young people engage in activism and what issues are they ready to "fight for"? Should youth work be "radical" and "political"? Let's discuss the links between activism and youth work and see how activism contributes to creation of a just society. Guest speaker: **Eimear Manning**, Ireland
- 29 October (13h CET) > **ID Talks Social Justice and Education:** What is the role of (non-formal) education in actively countering injustice and helping to build inclusive democracy for the benefit of all? What kind of tools and resources are needed? Let's discover examples of social justice education and peace education cases, and see how they are contextualised and targeted at young people with fewer opportunities. Guest speaker: **Maria Sakarias**, Estonia

Social Justice and Being Human

What does it mean to be human, who is included and who is excluded? What is social justice?



GUEST SPEAKER: MARIA PISANI

Prof. Maria Pisani (she/her) is an academic, activist, and youth worker. She is Head of the Department of Youth, Community and Migration Studies and Chairperson of the Platform for Migration at the University of Malta. A critical, intersectional feminist, her research centers on forced migration as a gendered process and the lived experiences of young asylum seekers. Her recent work explores critical posthuman approaches to youth work. Maria's scholarship is unapologetically political, driven by a deep commitment to social and planetary justice.



Article

Maria Pisani

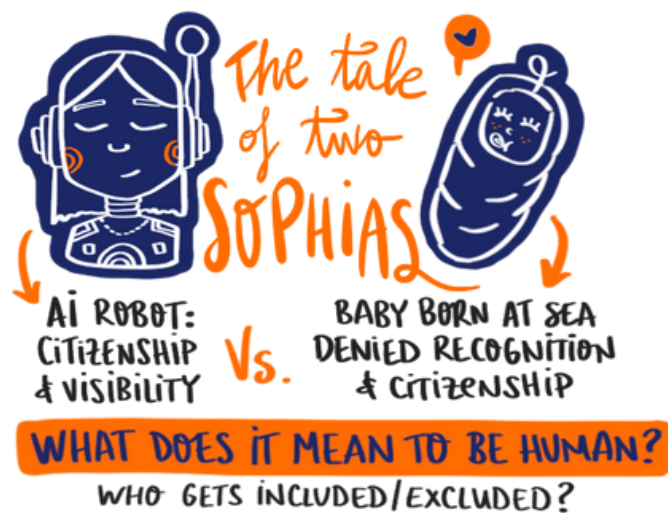


A tale of two Sophias: towards a critical posthuman youth work

Introduction

My presentation will begin by recounting a tale of two Sophias, a humanoid robot, and an 'illegal' baby immigrant. The tale of two Sophias locates my initial ideas for reflecting on how critical posthumanism might contribute to youth work theory and practice. In my presentation, I position youth work as a philosophical encounter, whilst also questioning the humanist legacy that lies at the heart of youth work theory.

Drawing on the work of critical posthuman feminists (Braidotti, 2019; Barad, 2007), I consider how youth work might respond to new questions, new opportunities, and challenges marked by the intersecting forces of advanced capitalism and the commodification of all life, grotesque inequalities, violence at, within and beyond our borders, climate change and advances in technology and Artificial Intelligence. Many of us – human and beyond – feel a sense of exhaustion, often experienced and witnessed as ecological crises, violence, anxiety, and depression. I conclude my presentation by providing some reflections on how critical posthuman theory may provide a lens to think through what it means to be human, the ethical implications, and how this might inform youth work practice (Pisani, 2023). The session seeks to carve out spaces to be brave and creative, to think and feel differently, and to embrace new possibilities as a praxis of hope.



Humanism and youth work

Baby Sophia is a human, born in the middle of the Mediterranean Sea, denied the possibility of safe and legal travel, barely recognised as fully human. The second is Sophia the cyborg. A humanoid robot who has been invited to speak at conferences and events worldwide, engaging audiences with her lifelike expressions and AI-driven conversations. Sophia became the first robot to be granted citizenship. Artificial intelligence is already making life and death decision on behalf of the human species, and many people are alarmed by the rapid rise of artificial intelligence, fearing its potential to disrupt jobs, privacy, human autonomy. And yet it also strikes me that baby Sophia has more reason to be terrified of people who generally look more like me, people who refuse to recognize her humanity. So, what does it mean to be human? What are the values that shape our relationship with each other, with technology and the planet?

For too long, youth work has unquestioningly reproduced the centuries-old, humanist project that positioned the human species at the centre, whilst simultaneously creating hierarchies of who counts as fully human, thereby justifying the exclusion, exploitation and devaluation of many humans as well as nonhuman life. In my presentation, I will invite you to think through and reflect upon the tensions that emerge from this paradigm: should youth work remain 'primarily concerned with people'? (Seal & Frost, 2014).

At this historical and situated conjuncture, I will argue that we need to transcend disciplinary boundaries and critically engage with new ideas, new concepts, new approaches, new theories, and new ethical paradigms to develop youth work practice that responds to the challenges we face today. This is a bold move. It requires moving outside of our comfort zone, because our comfort zone – the enlightenment legacy that places the ideal of 'Man' at the centre of everything has contributed to the physical, economic, and emotional violence we are all witnessing in our work and beyond.



THERE IS A PROBLEM WITH HUMANISM

IT CREATES TOXIC HIERARCHIES
OF VALUE, LEADING TO EXCLUSION,
INEQUALITY & EXPLOITATION

- o MAN > MACHINE
- o MAN > WOMAN
- o MAN > NATURE
- [...]

The ethical paradigm that placed the human species at the centre is the thinking that got us into this mess – binaries and hierarchies, and an economic paradigm that has instrumentalized all life, wherein everyone and everything is reduced to a resource for profit. To different degrees, we are all exploitable, and to different degrees, we all experience this depletion and exhaustion. And so, the task for my session is this: can we imagine a more just and egalitarian world that recognizes our co-dependency?

A critical post-human approach to youth work requires a radical repositioning of youth, a decentering that simultaneously also expands ethical accountability beyond the human and individualist autonomy, creating assemblages of human and more-than-human others. This radical move demands two shifts: the first is a step away from the hierarchical relations that continue to privilege some humans over others, more than evident in the violence of wars and genocide, poverty, and growing inequalities, wherein many young people around the world continue to be excluded from the category of 'Human' altogether (Pisani, 2017). The second is to confront the prevailing notion of human exceptionalism, thereby engaging issues such as climate change, ecological crises, and our relationship with technology and artificial intelligence.

Our contemporary challenges call for new theoretical paradigms in youth work, a radicalism that challenges and transcends human relations and 'society'. I think we need a new relational praxis that decentres the human – including young people - whilst also celebrating and respecting every unique young person and their situated reality. We can do this within a broader ecological framework that embraces and acknowledges that our existence and quality of life are embedded within, and dependent on, human and more-than-human relationships.

OUR CURRENT CONTEXT...

ADVANCED CAPITALISM,
CLIMATE CHANGE, VIOLENCE
AND BIG INEQUALITIES.



LOOK AROUND:
WHATEVER WE ARE DOING
IS NOT WORKING!

It means that before we even think about developing youth work curricula and approaches, we need to be asking questions about who 'we' are, what 'we' are becoming, what got us here, and what new ideas, values, and ways of thinking we need to explore in order to inform youth work praxis. It means thinking about youth work and young people's relationship with, in and as a part of the planet we share. What are the values that inform and shape these relationships? What ethical paradigm might generate spaces and opportunities for every individual and the planet to thrive? What does this mean for youth work?

The young person and the youth worker, as knowing subjects, are encouraged to engage in a pedagogical process that seeks to step away from the normative Eurocentric humanist and anthropocentric lens, to decentre the self, and critically reflect on one's position (and privileges) within broader power relations.

Posthuman thinking asks us to take this entanglement and co-dependency seriously, not as a useful metaphor, but as a scientific fact that can inform our work values and practice. We – as members of the human species- cannot survive, let alone thrive, without other humans and more-than-human life: the planet and technology. Life, growth, decay, and flourishing never belong to humans, or even trees, alone, but to messy networks of many beings existing and working together. We are engaged in life and living as a collective becoming, co-created with others.

A NEEDED SHIFT TO
POST-HUMANISM
「DECENTERING HUMANS, INCLUDING TECHNOLOGY
AND MORE-THAN-HUMAN LIFE IN OUR
ETHICAL FRAMEWORKS」



Such a lens understands young people as mediated beings - already human and machine - bodies merged with technology and enmeshed within economic and material relations that are driven by the logic of advanced capitalism and the maximization of profit. Intimacy, mental health, and the possibilities for human and planetary health are all embedded in relationships that are more-than-human. As non-unitary, cultural and social agents, young people, to different degrees and intensities, experience, shape and are shaped by historical processes, depending on the degree to which they are valued – or not. By way of example, today, we cannot speak of intimate relationships without considering the role of artificial intelligence, including therapy bots, AI boyfriends. Young people's lives, their understanding and experience of intimacy, relationships, and life are entangled with, mediated through, and shaped by a range of events, experiences, and actors, including humans, algorithms, data, and feelings. The digital and non-digital worlds are one and entangled.

We are all made of the same stuff, the same matter, with, in and of the world. We are already human and machine, enmeshed and inseparable. We exist, we suffer, and we thrive within these relationships, with those close to us, and also those we will never meet. Be it climate change, ecological disasters, Covid 19, poverty, and the growing mental health epidemic, this is violence embedded within relationships, the physics of interconnectedness, as described in quantum physics, and the oneness described in various indigenous traditions and religious philosophies.



A critical, posthuman approach to youth work

What if we are to understand and embrace this complexity? Relationships are central to youth work, yet a posthuman youth work invites us to move beyond traditional notions of belonging, crossing human, geographical, political, technological, ecological, and animal boundaries. It calls us to recognise our co-dependency and ethical responsibility to those we may never meet and yet to whom we remain deeply connected (Pisani, 2023). A posthuman approach to youth work remains grounded in the day to day, embodied and embedded experiences of young people, that starts where young people are at, but with a new critical awareness of, and respect towards our tangled interdependence with the human and nonhuman (including technological) others. It is grounded in an ethical paradigm that calls on us to stay attentive: how do our practices, our relationships with each other, the planet, technology — human and nonhuman — reflect the values we claim, and how might they help us imagine more just and connected futures together? How might we work towards a more compassionate and just world?

WHAT ARE THE VALUES THAT SHAPE YOUTH WORK? POST-HUMAN YOUTH WORK SHOULD CHALLENGE PRIVILEGE, EXCEPTIONALISM & EMBRACE INTERCONNECTEDNESS



This is my pedagogical task as an academic and as a youth worker, not to provide answers, but to carve out spaces to ask new questions and to run with new ideas – ideas that may move us, to feel something, to think differently, to be brave, creative and to think the unthinkable. What new concepts and ideas do we need to make sense of the world? How might we understand social justice within a new ethical paradigm? What of ecological justice? Technological justice? And how, if at all, are they enmeshed? What are we becoming? And what will we be leaving behind? What are the values that will shape our ideas and how we act in and on the world? Youth work, as an ‘exercise in moral philosophy’ (Young, 1999) can provide the space, opportunity and skills for young people to question in an affirmative way, to think, and to explore the ethical issues and decisions that need to be taken, and to imagine new possibilities and opportunities, sticking with hope: always mindful that hope is a political act.

IDEAS MATTER

"WHEN WE USE BINARIES, WE SIMPLIFY THINGS. IT IS LAZY THINKING. THE WORLD IS COMPLEX!"



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QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- WHO ARE WE BECOMING?
- WHAT VALUES GUIDE OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH ONE ANOTHER, TECH & NATURE?
- WHAT ARE THE IMPLICATIONS FOR YOUTH?

EDITORIAL INFORMATION

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On behalf of the SALTO Inclusion & Diversity!

