

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

Download this and other SALTO Inclusion & Diversity booklets for free at www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/. This document does not necessarily reflect the official views of the European Commission, the SALTO Inclusion & Diversity Resource Centre or the organisation co-operating with them.

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 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”?



GUEST SPEAKER: EIMEAR MANNING

Eimear Manning is National Youth Council of Ireland's 'Youth & Climate Justice Development Officer'. She coordinates youth-led projects centred on issues of climate change, climate justice, and meaningful youth inclusion. Through her experience drafting the new Council of Europe Recommendation on 'Young People and Climate Action', she has become familiar with the important overlap between youth work, politics, and the many forms of activism. Eimear's session will dive into nuances of this important nexus.



Article

Eimear Manning

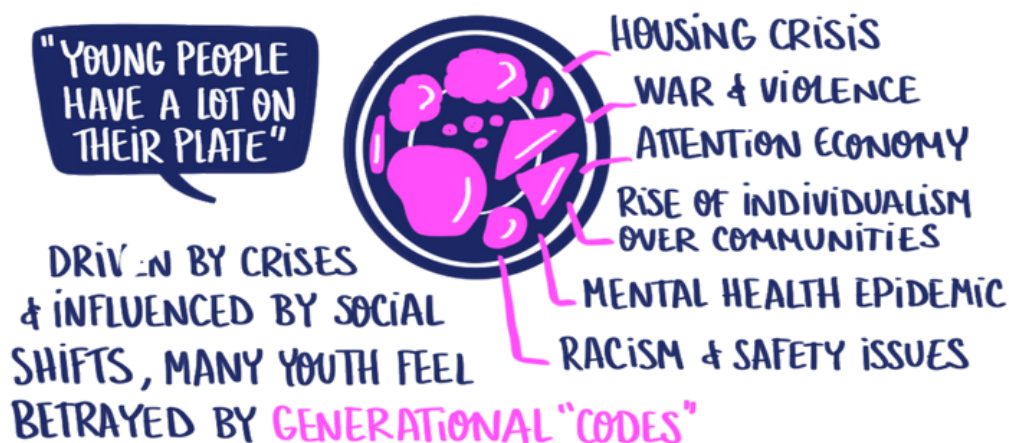


A Full Plate

Young people have 'a lot on their plate', as the saying goes. Some of the issues young people face are common experiences across every generation, such as peer pressure and bullying, or drug and alcohol abuse by themselves, family members, or peers. But new issues are being laid on the shoulders of young people, who are already burdened enough just trying to find their place in the world.

They now have constant advertising in their pockets, battling for their eyeballs in an 'attention economy' (1, 2); the effortless use of AI, further disconnecting young people from the reality of the world around them, or causing serious harm through the use of 'deepfakes' (3, 4, 5); images of violence on their phones, in their hands, making the atrocities of war unavoidable (6, 7); and climate change – a threat so large, vast, and ever-worsening that it now threatens every single human on the planet – themselves included (8, 9, 10).

As youth workers, we are aware that young people are growing up in an increasingly diverse and globalised world. This leads us to a general interest in fostering tolerance in the young people we work with, to help them become global citizens. However, the world outside youth work spaces is growing increasingly intolerant in almost every aspect of life, from culture, religion, race, ethnicity, education, and politics (11). Today's younger generations are growing up in a world where it's becoming more acceptable to be intolerant; where an 'Us versus Them' narrative is now commonplace in many societies (12, 13). This can be confusing to young people who are trying to make the world a better, kinder place for their generation and the generations yet to follow.



Generational Codes

After the assassination of American right-wing political activist and media personality, Charlie Kirk, in September 2025, there was a resurgence in blame between left- and right-wing political sides for inciting violence in the United States. Interested to understand both narratives, I was exploring how young people were reacting to this news on TikTok and came across a video by Jamaal Burkmar, a British Film Institute Ambassador. Something he discussed really struck me. He said:

'Every new generation ends up trying to reject the phrases and codes that the previous generation inherited and tried to make the new generation inherit too. Older generations tend to think this is because newer generations are "rebellious", but what if it's our fault? What if the older generations failed those codes; abused them; didn't maintain them properly (14).

An example of these generational codes could include 'The Customer is Always Right'. For a while, this was a commonplace saying to maintain high standards for customer service. Many businesses, two generations ago, had signs in store-front windows with this phrase scrawled across it, signalling potential buyers to use their service. However, as time went on and customers began abusing this practice to make increasingly bold requests or maintain attitudes of superiority and disrespect for retail and hospitality workers, the phrase eventually fizzled out of use in these industries.

Another, more recent example would be 'Innocent Until Proven Guilty'. I'm a millennial, and I can feel the internal pull to agree with this statement, as I grew up with it and the premise made sense to me at the time. However, it's become much more difficult to see the merit in this phrase. The world has seen sexual assault cases collapse unjustly (15, 16, 17), and trials for members of law enforcement killing innocent civilians, only for the police officers to walk free or get a disproportionately lenient sentence (18, 19). While there has always been injustice in the world, never before have these cases been so easily watchable and shareable. Young people being inundated with news of injustices across the globe are trying to set a new standard, which means rejecting those generational codes. When those 'home truths' are betrayed over and over again, why should we be surprised when people stop believing in them and want to change the narrative? I believe this disruption of an unjust status quo is where modern youth activism stems.

Before we continue into the next section, defining the types of youth activism, it is important to note that genuine youth activism, the kind of youth activism this article discusses, is always peaceful. When this article speaks of young people being activists, we should understand that this refers to them exercising their human right to peaceful protest and assembly, using non-violent mechanisms and approaches to voice their concerns and advocate for meaningful change.

THEY SAY...

~~"The customer is always right"~~

~~"Innocent until proven guilty"~~

IF THESE "HOME TRUTHS" ARE BETRAYED OVER & OVER AGAIN, IT IS NATURAL THAT PEOPLE STOP BELIEVING IN THEM & TRY TO CHANGE THEM.



Activism is Love and Love is Activism

When you think of forms of youth activism, what do you think of? Maybe marches through the streets by frustrated protestors, or aggravated social media posts. When you type 'youth activist' into Google Images, you see image after image of cleverly worded protest signs; young people shouting into megaphones; angry faces; tearful faces; and fists of solidarity and perseverance raised overhead. However, 'activism' isn't one-size-fits-all. There are many different forms and each has a unique place in society. Some examples of activism include:

- Went to a protest organising meeting;
- ARTivism (using art to highlight a justice message);
- Volunteering;
- Social Media – sharing quotes or songs of solidarity, dates of events, etc.;
- Wrote a letter/email to a politician or newspaper;
- Signed or promoted an online petition;
- Spoke up in the workplace/place of learning;
- Stopped an act of prejudice (took back your power or gave someone else power);
- Registered to vote and/or voted;
- Supported local businesses or other activists;
- Told someone you cared about them (20).

WHAT IS YOUTH ACTIVISM?

PROTESTS, ARTIVISM, PETITIONS,
VOLUNTEERING, VOTING, AND
EVERYDAY ACTS OF CARE

« GOVERNMENTS SHOULD SUPPORT,
NOT SUPPRESS, YOUTH ACTIVISM! »

The last example can sometimes cause confusion. How can telling someone I care about them be activism? It's important to understand that activism is a by-product, not a motive (21). Acts of activism derive from passion and love for a cause. Recognising injustice and wanting to fight for equality shows compassion for those suffering from that oppression. The more personal and/or emotional a connection to a cause, the more motivated you'll be. Therefore, activism starts its journey with acts of love, even if that's just listening to understand (as opposed to listening to respond, or listening to defend your viewpoint), or taking the time to learn about movement history and/or the experiences of those currently or historically oppressed.

When we remember that activism is love and love is activism, it helps us better understand that the generalised images we see across media depicting young faces red with anger or furrowed in frustration are rooted in how acts of injustice make communities feel unloved, misunderstood, and marginalised. Telling people you care and stand in solidarity with them, particularly from communities you are not directly a part of, is not what a capitalistic society wants. Capitalism wants us to need to rely on ourselves as individuals and products as opposed to each other. Therefore it is an act of resistance to love broadly and deeply.



Should Youth Work be Political?

This is a contentious debate in European Youth Work, as discussed by Yael Ohana's paper on European youth work titled, 'What's Politics got to do with it?' (22). At first, Ohana was surprised that this even was a debate. Many youth workers believe that human rights education is political by nature, because it has to be for human rights to be centred and achieved. However, youth worker opinions have been slowly shifting on this, with some now believing that critical analysis skills can be developed in young people without the need for the youth worker or youth organisation to be political. When Ohana delved deeper into reasons why youth workers would prefer to be perceived as apolitical, it became clear that external pressures had a significant part to play:

- Funders not wanting to fund political projects;
- Increasing pressure from alt-right organisations;
- Societal/Parental disapproval and/or panic about young people being 'brainwashed';
- Confidence gaps from youth workers feeling unequipped in addressing political issues, themes, or events in ways that are attractive, relevant, and motivating for young people.

These are understandable reasons as to why a youth worker would rather not be associated with politics in their practice, but while I understand these concerns, I would argue that Youth Work has always been political. Youth work has its origins in community work (23). The emphasis of community work in the late 1960s is that of planning change in consultation between local communities and government agencies (24).

"The capitalist economy would not survive if it allowed equal access for all to the resources in our society and, while many of the unjust and insensitive decisions taken at local level are a result of sloppy thinking, bureaucratic inertia, insensitivity and ignorance, the majority are shaped by the demands of an unequal and unjust economic system, which depends for its survival upon the exploitation of a large proportion of the working population and their families." (Community Action, 1974, p.23)

This was the background to the development of youth work as a practice. Those veins of equity and equal access for all still run under the skin of youth work.

Additionally, the cornerstone of European politics has always been democracy – where everyone has an equal say. But young people are uniquely affected by this, as they are one of the key groups who historically do not have a say in how their country or society around them operates, mainly because they are not of voting age, but also because they are rarely consulted on their opinions in political discourse.



YOUTH WORK & POLITICS

YOUTH WORK IS OFTEN PRESSURED TO
 "STAY NEUTRAL" FOR FEAR OF REPERCUSSIONS
BUT IT MUST BE POLITICAL!
 & DEVELOP VOICES & AGENCY IN YOUTH

Sociologist and youth researcher Klaus Hurrelmann says:

'In Germany we are not succeeding...we are not the only ones, but it is very noticeable here... To involve young people political life where decisions are actually being made, where power is being exercised, where the course for the future is being set... In these arenas, younger generations are not represented.' (25).

Research conducted at Harvard University (26) and the University of Melbourne (27) backs this up, showing that young people today have the least trust in democracy than any other age group. However, a key part of many youth work organisations is to assist young people in exercising their democratic rights.

The Council of Europe Committee of Ministers Recommendation on Youth Work, 2017, gives the following definition in its explanatory note:

'Youth work is a broad term covering a wide variety of activities of a social, cultural, educational, environmental and/or political nature by, with, and for young people...Youth work is quintessentially a social practice, working with young people and the societies in which they live, facilitating young people's active participation and inclusion in their communities and in decision-making.' (28).

Wherever you sit on the argument of political or non-political, and for whatever reason, the goal isn't to influence young people with regard to any particular political agenda. The goal is to support that young person to be an engaged citizen in whatever way that means for the young person. Good youth work supports young people by aiding and enhancing their personal and social development, and a big part of that learning is acceptance and tolerance, which (given the rise of extreme political views) is unfortunately considered a political stance in itself these days (29).



**YOUTH WORK MUST BUILD
CONFIDENCE & CRITICAL THINKING**



Conclusion: Youth Workers are Activists

Youth work is a social practice, and politics is systemic, thus it will always be part of societies. However, you don't need to see your work as 'political' should you not wish to see it that way. But just be aware that your interactions with young people as a youth worker were built on the foundations of equity and democracy. As good youth workers, we should always strive to ensure young people's voices are equipped to be heard at every level, including political, should they want to enter that discourse.

Being a youth worker in itself, I would argue, is at the very least a form of activism. Why?

Because activism is love and love is activism, remember? It takes a lot of love to care for and guide a group as under-represented as youth. Our work in meeting young people where they're at; supporting them to understand the injustices of the world; helping them find their sense of solidarity; to feel empowered within themselves – they're all acts of respect and love. So while you may or may not feel 'political', I do hope you feel the power within yourself as an 'activist' to continue supporting the young people striving to make our world a kinder and fairer place for both current and future generations.



References:

1. <https://www.profgalloway.com/the-attention-economy-and-young-people/>
2. <https://www.humanetech.com/youth/the-attention-economy>
3. <https://www.oco.ie/app/uploads/2025/09/OCO-AI-and-Us-Young-peoples-views-and-understanding-of-Artificial-Intelligence.pdf>
4. <https://unric.org/en/the-ai-generation-youth-in-the-artificial-intelligence-era/>
5. <https://www.apa.org/topics/artificial-intelligence-machine-learning/health-advisory-ai-adolescent-well-being>
6. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11260099/>
7. <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/photography/war-children-powerful-photos-conflict-b1760932.html>
8. [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196\(21\)00278-3/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(21)00278-3/fulltext)
9. <https://www.unicef.org/blog/what-is-eco-anxiety>
10. <https://www.frontiersin.org/journals/psychology/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.872544/full>
11. <https://www.arihantainstitute.org/blog/40-understanding-the-menace-of-social-intolerance>
12. <https://humanrights.ca/story/us-vs-them-process-othering>
13. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1090951620300377>
14. <https://www.tiktok.com/@jamaalburkmar/video/7549666361845320982>
15. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-london-42366629>
16. <https://safeline.org.uk/news/broken-system-lost-evidence-gb-news/>
17. <https://www.rte.ie/news/courts/2023/1019/1411822-case-collapses/>

18. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c62llg60p42o>
19. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/09/24/us/police-killings-prosecution-charges.html>
20. <https://www.youth.ie/documents/activism-the-sdgs-and-youth/>
21. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/ie/blog/passion/202504/the-heart-of-activism-it-starts-with-caring-not-action>
22. https://understanding-europe.org/content/uploads/2021/10/fp_jfe-reader-special-b-10-200303.pdf?x48423
23. https://www.youthworkireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/the_historical_development_of_irish_youthwork.pdf
24. Community Action Journal (1973) (Oxford University Manchester, Vol, VIII, No. 3 October)
25. <https://www.ardmediathek.de/video/ndr-info/neue-studie-deutschlands-jugend-so-pessimistisch-wie-nie/ndr/Y3JpZDovL25kci5kZS9jYzQ1YmRhOS05MTdjLTQ3ODMtOTJiOS04MDYyNzBIMDM0ZjU>
26. https://jugendfuereuropa.s3.eu-central-1.amazonaws.com/download/file/4143?response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DFP_jfe-reader-special-b-10-200303.pdf&response-cache-control=public&X-Amz-Content-Sha256=UNSIGNED-PAYLOAD&X-Amz-Algorithm=AWS4-HMAC-SHA256&X-Amz-Credential=AKIAUCI3T77LQ4XU6EES%2F20251013%2Feu-central-1%2Fs3%2Faws4_request&X-Amz-Date=20251013T092345Z&X-Amz-SignedHeaders=host&X-Amz-Expires=600&X-Amz-Signature=6a9ea9393189504d540cdbfe7aa05a16c02a211189bf10877086f96032190c48;https://qz.com/848031/harvard-research-suggests-that-an-entire-global-generation-has-lost-faith-in-democracy
27. <https://pursuit.unimelb.edu.au/articles/australia-s-gen-y-democracy-gap>
28. [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52013XG0614\(02\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52013XG0614(02)&from=EN)
29. <https://www.sciencespo.fr/en/news/is-tolerance-political/>

EDITORIAL INFORMATION

Published in October 2025 by SALTO-YOUTH Inclusion and Diversity Resource Centre (Support & Advanced Learning and Training Opportunities within The Erasmus+: Youth in Action and European Solidarity Corps programmes)

Official Website: www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/inclusion/

SALTO-Jint, Grétrystraat26, 1000 Brussel, Belgium

Tel: +32 (0)2 209 07 20 Fax: +32 (0)2 209 07 49

inclusion@salto-youth.net

Legal info: JINT vzw, 0441.254.285, RPR Nederlandstalige Ondernemingsrechtbank Brussel

Coordination: Henrique Gonçalves and Marija Kljajic (inclusion@salto-youth.net)

Facilitator: Anna Yeghoyan (ayeghoyan@yahoo.com)

Digital Co-Facilitator: Maria Kousoula (marakikousoula@gmail.com)

Graphic Facilitator: Olalla González (olalla@shokkin.org)

General Editor of the Publication: Maria Kousoula (marakikousoula@gmail.com)

Reproduction and use for non-commercial purposes are permitted provided the source www.SALTO-YOUTH.net/Inclusion/ is mentioned and inclusion@salto-youth.net is notified.



On behalf of the SALTO Inclusion & Diversity!

