



European Training Strategy  
**A Competence Model  
for Youth Workers  
to Work Internationally**

salto|youth

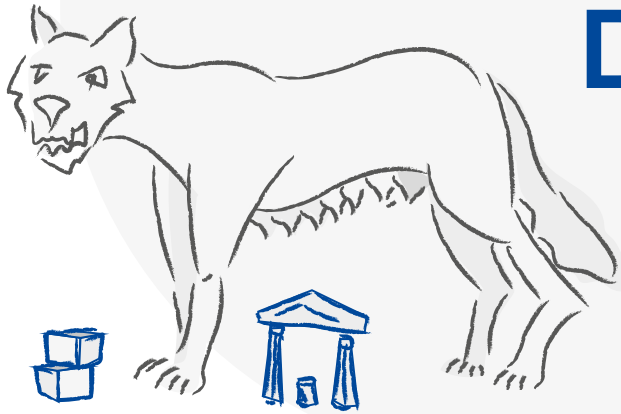
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We developed this [Competence Model for Youth Workers to Work Internationally](#) in the framework of the [European Training Strategy \(ETS\) in the field of youth](#). The ETS helps to improve the quality of support systems for youth activities and to build capacity within youth organisations.

For more information: [www.salto-youth.net/trainingstrategy/](http://www.salto-youth.net/trainingstrategy/).

**ROME** WASN'T  
BUILT **IN A**  
**DAY.**



# A bit of background

Developing specific key competences has become increasingly important for youth workers to work internationally, and this development is starting to show up on the agenda of the European institutions. Providers of non-formal learning, training and education, as well as Erasmus+: Youth in Action are today also paying closer attention to these competences. We are convinced that if we identify and describe youth worker competences better, this will help improve the image and recognition of youth workers in society. At the same time, we have developed strategies, tools and educational materials that will make capacity-building more effective.

Our approach connects youth and education policies to the objectives of the Erasmus+: Youth in Action programme and vice versa. The competence model adds an international dimension to youth work in Europe. Moreover, it helps define quality criteria and indicators (in and for youth work), as highlighted in the Council conclusions on quality of youth work (2010) and in the final declaration of the 2nd European Youth Work Convention (2015): '[...] there needs to be a core framework of quality standards for youth work responsive to national contexts, including competence models for youth workers, and accreditation systems for prior experience and learning [...]'].

We approached the task of developing a [Competence Model for Youth Workers to Work Internationally](#) in two ways:

- a) We gathered existing documents related to learning mobility and to the competences of youth workers involved in transnational learning mobility projects.
- b) We analysed the existing practise in international youth work – based on professional experiences and reports.

# 1.1 Intentions and target groups

## 1.1.1 Why was this competence model developed?

The [Competence Model for Youth Workers to Work Internationally](#) acknowledges that youth work is becoming more and more European and international, as are the lives of young people. The competence model makes these international youth work settings more explicit. It focuses for instance on working in international teams and on supporting young people in international learning mobility projects.

The competence model should further serve as a source of inspiration for organisers of youth worker training. It will help them pinpoint what competence areas to consider when designing the curricula for such training courses. Within the Erasmus+: Youth in Action programme, this competence model serves as a reference document for National Agencies and

beneficiaries of the Erasmus+ programme who offer youth worker training.

Further, this competence model supports youth workers themselves in assessing their own competences. This in turn helps them identify areas where they need further training.

This competence model also helps institutional stakeholders determine youth workers' occupational profiles and the recognition of this profession by society.

Most importantly, this competence model is a tool to play with and reflect on. Feel free to adapt it to your needs, contexts and target groups, because youth work realities vary.

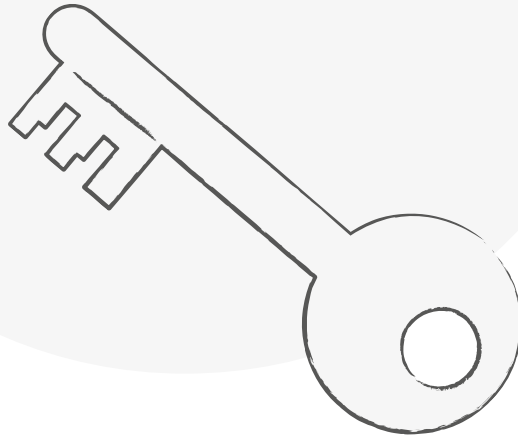
## 1.1.2 Who is the competence model for?

The [Competence Model for Youth Workers to Work Internationally](#) is useful for

- youth workers who are involved in international learning mobility projects;
- educational staff and trainers who organise international mobility projects; and
- organisations and institutions that develop training strategies for youth workers.

If you already have some experience in the field of youth work at a European and local level, you probably can relate to this competence model. To work in this environment requires a good understanding of learning processes, of youth work mechanisms and of the socio-political and socio-economic contexts in which youth work is carried out. This competence model is to be seen as a supplement to already established youth work education, training and resources. It does not attempt to define minimum or maximum performance levels of youth workers.

A  
**GOLDEN KEY  
CAN OPEN  
ANY  
DOOR.**



## 1.2 A few words regarding the competences

The competence model focuses on competences needed to prepare, implement and evaluate learning mobility projects. It is not meant to be seen as a 'must-have' list of competences. However, it includes a number of desirable competences and behaviours that reflect healthy underlying attitudes. This is a basic model and it is not exhaustive, i.e. some topics, such as digital competences, social media literacy, and environmental competences, were not included.

The [Competence Model for Youth Workers to Work Internationally](#) is a tool to support youth work activities that have an educational dimension. The model is not set in stone, but should serve as a dynamic framework that will keep on evolving.



## 1.3 The four dimensions of the competence model

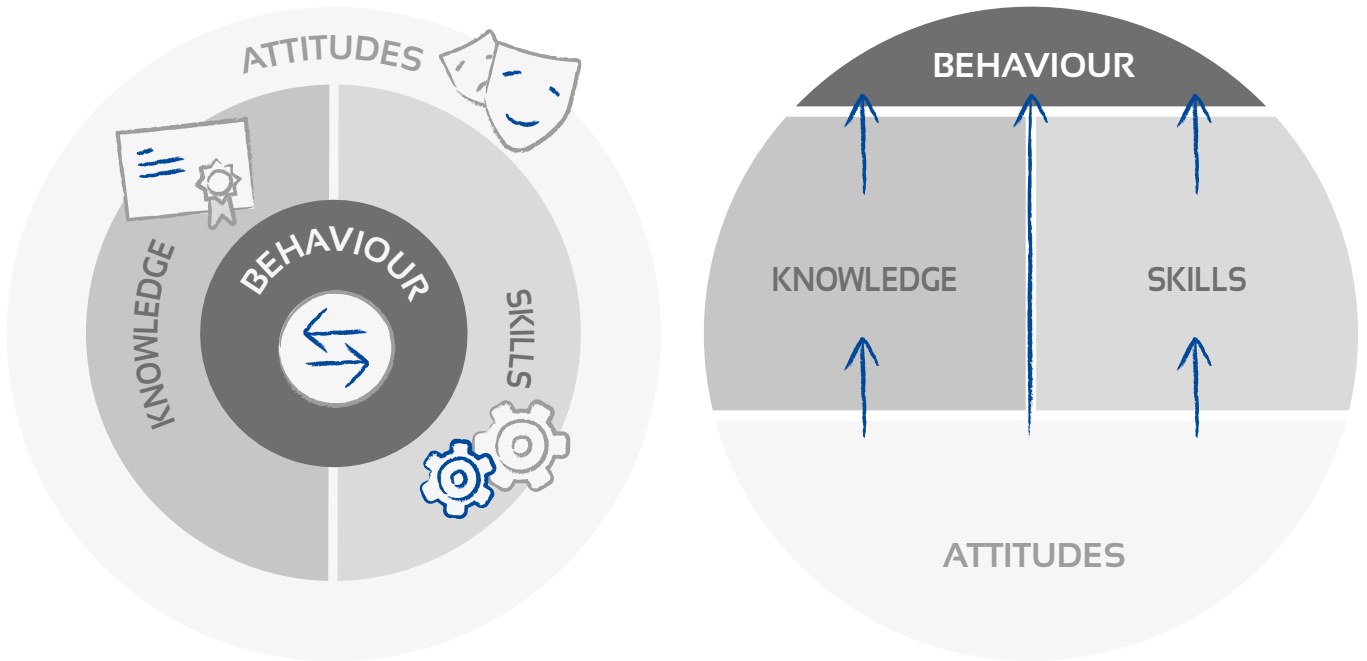
In the competence model, we focus on the following four dimensions: attitudes, knowledge, skills, and behaviours.

- Attitudes (the youth worker's willingness) are the pre-requisite, the foundation for competence development. They lead to
- knowledge (gained through experience, books, the Internet, etc.) and
- skills (ability to perform a task, to apply knowledge and turn attitudes into actions), which will then lead to
- appropriate and contextual behaviour.

Therefore, behaviour encompasses attitudes [and actions], knowledge, and skills. Through behaviour we can assess the competence level of the youth worker and whether it is sufficient for his/her work. In short: behaviour reflects the underlying attitudes of a youth worker.

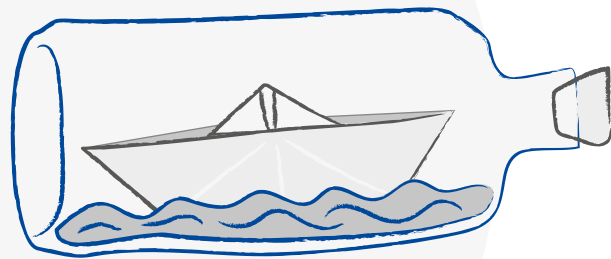
Feel free to use behaviour as the starting point to develop indicators and tools to accompany this competence model.

Imagine the competence framework as a pyramid or cylinder, but in no way as something linear. Competences are dynamic and all its elements are interrelated and interdependent – and could look something like this:



There is no hierarchy between the various elements mentioned in each competence area (under attitudes, knowledge, skills, and behaviours, respectively). The elements mentioned first are no more important than those mentioned last.

IT'S  
**NOT THE SIZE**  
OF THE BOAT



IT'S  
**THE MOTION**  
IN THE OCEAN.

# The wider context

## 2.1 European and international dimensions

We developed the [Competence Model for Youth Workers to Work Internationally](#) within the context of 'European youth policies and programmes'. The competence model refers to the international dimension of these activities and the interaction in learning mobility projects.

It was challenging to decide what aspects to focus on in this competence model, especially considering its international dimension. For instance, should intercultural learning be a competence area in its own right or should we include it as an element that plays a part in all competence areas? Similarly, international youth work brings by default an international dimension to all competence areas.

In our model, international youth work has the following characteristics:

- Work is done together with international colleagues, often using a foreign language as a lingua franca,
- in a value-driven context, e.g. European programmes promote participation, inclusion, democracy, human rights, etc.,
- mainly in a residential setting, because living and working together 24 hours a day influences non-formal and informal processes,
- and with a link to the wider political context (European or global).

IT  
TAKES TWO  
TO  
TANGO



## 2.2 What is a youth worker?

Youth worker education and training varies throughout the different European countries. In some countries, youth work study programmes exist and in others not. In some, youth work is recognised as a profession and in others not. In some countries, youth work is mainly carried out by volunteers, in others by paid staff. Some countries have a longer tradition of youth organisations than others and different concepts and approaches have been adopted.

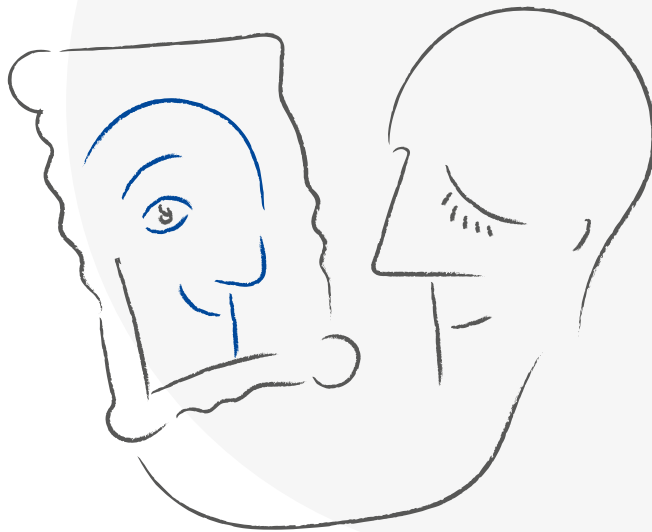
We took these different realities and challenges into account in the [Competence Model for Youth Workers to Work Internationally](#). This competence model is based on Otten/Fennes' (2008) description of expectations towards youth work as a profession: '[...] given the demands and expectations of European youth work as described above, certain professional conditions must be stipulated and

demands must be formulated which need to be met by educational personnel. For example: a (specialised) scientific training beneficial to their type of work and own pertinent face-to-face experience in the field; an involvement in an organisation or at least an affiliation with a structure; a certain permanence and continuity; financial and social coverage; cooperative discourse; etc.'

We have formulated an even more precise definition: 'Youth workers work with young people in a wide variety of non-formal and informal learning contexts, typically focusing on their young charges' personal and social development through one-on-one relationships and group-based activities. While acting as trainers/facilitators may be their main task, it is just as likely for youth workers to take a socio-educational or social work-based approach. In many cases, these roles and functions overlap.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-3045/Glossary%20-%20Set\\_of\\_trainer\\_competences\\_low%20resolution.pdf](https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-3045/Glossary%20-%20Set_of_trainer_competences_low%20resolution.pdf)

**WALK**  
YOUR **TALK!**



## 2.3 What is meant by youth?

The UN has probably the most flexible definition of youth: 'YOUTH is best understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence. That's why, as a category, youth is more fluid than other fixed age-groups. Yet, age is the easiest way to define this group, particularly in relation to education and employment, because "youth" is often referred to a person between the ages of leaving compulsory education, and finding their first job.'

From a psychological perspective, young people are persons in the age range of 20 to 35, although youth starts earlier if we include the period of adolescence. Erik Erikson (1959) distinguishes the following stages of psychosocial development: the young adult stage (from 13 to 19) precedes early adulthood (from 20 to 39) and this precedes middle

adulthood (from 40 to 64). Daniel Levinson (1978) and Rhona Rapoport (1980) add that '[...] for a variety of reasons, timeliness on young adulthood cannot be exactly defined – producing different results according to the different mix of overlapping indices (legal, maturational, occupational, sexual, emotional and the like) employed, or on whether a developmental perspective [... or] the socialisation perspective is taken.' For Erikson, the psychological crisis during adolescence is about 'fidelity'. Young people ask themselves the existential question: 'Who am I and what can I be?' They learn to position themselves in relationship to others.

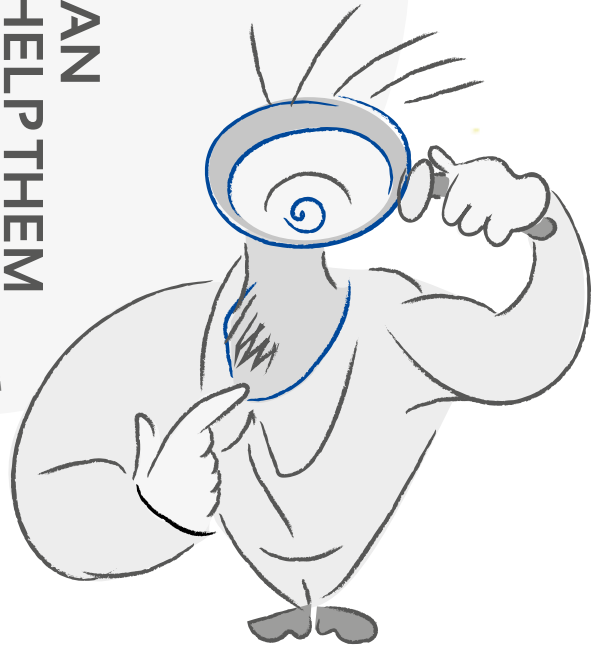
Neuroscience defines adolescence as a '[...] period between the physical changes during puberty and the capacity of an individual to play an independent role in society' (Sarah-Jayne Blakemore, 2008).



YOU CAN'T  
TEACH  
PEOPLE  
ANYTHING.

YOU CAN  
ONLY HELP THEM  
DISCOVER  
IT WITHIN  
THEMSELVES.

Galileo Galilei



## 2.4 Adaptation to specific contexts

Competences are always connected to a specific context (intercultural work, youth work, social work, etc.). This makes them challenging to explore and assess. For this reason, competence development frameworks vary according to target groups, youth workers and work context.

Our proposed competence model supports training and quality in youth work. It offers the opportunity to develop training strategies, training courses and will allow you to analyse your own competences and address personal challenges. The competence model is a good basis for peer-support, peer-review and (self-) assessment. It gives impulses that will encourage youth workers to try out new things and invest in personal and professional development.

## 2.5 The principles of non-formal learning

This competence model is specifically adapted to European youth work and the principles of non-formal learning. The following principles are applicable to every competence.

The principles of non-formal learning<sup>2</sup> behind this competence model are:

- Young person centredness (a focus on young persons and their development)
- Agreed on learning objectives between youth workers and young persons
- Transparency
- Confidentiality
- Attention to content and methodology
- Voluntariness
- Participation
- Ownership of the development process
- Empowerment
- Democratic values and practices

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from 'Quality in non-formal education and training in the field of European youth work'. Helmut Fennes and Hendrik Otten for SALTO T&C RC (2008).

**THE  
WORLD IS FULL OF  
MAGIC THINGS**



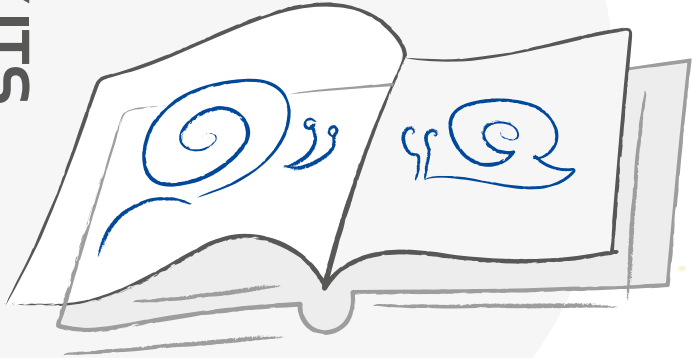
**PATIENTLY  
WAITING  
FOR OUR  
SENSES  
TO GROW  
SHARPER**

W. B. Yeats

## 2.6 The 'magical dimension'

In the interaction between young people and youth workers, there are these 'magical moments' that end up having a decisive effect on the lives of young people. We hope that our list of attitudes and behaviours brings back memories of inspirational moments where you as a youth worker or youth work trainer made a difference. And even though these special moments are difficult to explain, they show the important role that a youth worker can play in a young person's life. This magical spark is not a competence one can acquire, but instead it is the magic of human interactions. It has to do with intuition, with being genuine and with believing in people. These things make it more likely for the magic to happen – sometimes without us even knowing.

DON'T  
JUDGE A BOOK  
BY ITS  
COVER.



# Youth worker competences

In this document, we understand competences as an overall system of values, attitudes and beliefs as well as skills and knowledge that we use to successfully manage complex situations and tasks. Self-confidence, motivation and well-being are important pre-requisites for a youth worker to fully make use of his/her competences.<sup>3</sup>

We chose a multi-dimensional approach for this competence model. First, we describe the competences. Then each competence is divided into attitudes, knowledge, skills, and behaviours.

The competences complement each other. Some aspects highlighted under a given competence might be repeated in others. We made a conscious choice of what fits best in which area. Therefore, it is important to see the competences together as a whole and not independently.

## The competence model consists of the following eight competences:

- 1 Facilitating individual and group learning in an enriching environment
- 2 Designing programmes
- 3 Organising and managing resources
- 4 Collaborating successfully in teams
- 5 Communicating meaningfully with others
- 6 Displaying intercultural competence
- 7 Networking and advocating
- 8 Developing evaluative practices to assess and implement appropriate change

We define the eight competences in more detail in the following tables.

<sup>3</sup> SALTO T&C RC, 'Training of trainers. Self-Perception Inventory',  
<http://www.salto-youth.net/rc/training-and-cooperation/tc-rc-nanetworktcs/tot/tot-background-docs/>

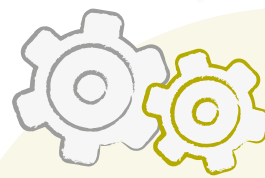
# 1 Facilitating individual and group learning in an enriching environment

...means establishing dialogue and ensuring cooperation mechanisms with individuals, groups and communities. This means that the youth worker has the attitudes, knowledge and skills to support young people in identifying and pursuing their learning needs and to then choose, adapt or create methods and methodologies accordingly. Ideally, the youth worker and the young person trust each other. The youth worker actively supports and enhances young people's learning processes, self-responsibility, and motivation, and the youth worker empowers young people to improve their personal situation.

# Attitudes



- Readiness to improvise & accept ambiguity
- Being open towards learning/unexpected learning (for oneself & others)
  - Readiness to upskill & stay up-to-date with existing methods & related sources
  - Readiness to be challenged & take risks
- Readiness to trust young people's capacity to direct their own learning
- Being open to using different ways & methods to encourage creativity, problem solving and 'out-of-the-box' thinking
- Willingness to address ethical issues as a source of learning about & from others. Being open and accepting that failure is a part of learning



# Skills

- Skill of choosing appropriate methods & assessing young people's learning needs & objectives
- Skill of identifying, organising & referring to appropriate resources to support one's own learning
- Skill of initiating & supporting self-reflection on learning
- Skill of identifying dimensions & stages in group processes
- Skill of building up & supporting the self-confidence of young people
  - Skill of empathising in a way that others can learn from one's experience
  - Skill of addressing crisis situations
  - Skill of enabling individual and/or group reflection on ethical issues

- Knowledge of learning styles, knowing methods to identify them & to work with them
- Knowledge of group processes, mechanisms & principles (including power relations)
- Knowledge of competence assessment principles & related methods
- Knowledge on how to look for information about methods & methodology & how to share the resources adequately
  - Knowledge of the principles of methodologies used in the field of youth
- Knowledge about emotions & emotional mechanisms
- Knowledge about crisis mechanisms & management

# Knowledge



- Motivates & empowers young people
- Is honest, respectful & transparent
- Fosters democratic & active participation
- Respects ethical boundaries when working with (the group of) young people
- Raises young people's awareness of the power of change
- Supports young people in dealing with crisis situations in a fair & constructive manner
  - Generates trust & maintains confidentiality
  - Acknowledges the experiences of others
  - Encourages & actively supports collective actions
  - Addresses factors supporting & blocking creativity
- Has the courage to improvise & experiment & recognises the importance of this
- Aims at reaching educational aims by using specific ways & methods that encourage creativity, problem solving, 'out-of-the-box' thinking, in different environmental aspects
- Is OK with imperfections, failures, and mistakes



# Behaviours



## 2 Designing programmes

...involves a good understanding of the different groups and environments that a youth worker works with. This precondition is essential to being able to develop and design programmes – be it with an explicit educational purpose or not. The youth worker applies non-formal learning values and principles in the programmes and responds to the needs and realities of young people, which are more complex in an international context. This competence area includes, implicitly, how designing programmes can involve addressing political, societal and cultural issues in youth work.



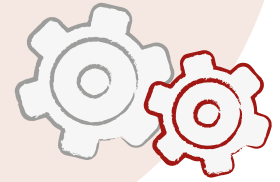
## Attitudes

- Willingness to research & stay up-to-date with the newest developments in non-formal learning-related practices
- Readiness to accept the 'unexpected' (elements, learning, etc.)
- Readiness to allow one's own views on educational approaches to be challenged & to revise one's views where needed
- Readiness to face external factors that can influence the development of the programme/practice
  - Displaying genuine interest in the group's needs
    - Willingness to see each young person in a holistic way

- Skill of working with & on values through different [learning] approaches
- Skill of developing meaningful programmes that motivate & engage young people
- Skill of identifying external influences on the development of practice of youth workers

- Skill of assessing/analysing the needs of young people & then involving them in developing a corresponding programme
- Skill of adjusting the educational approach to the needs of the young people
- Skill of taking the socio-political & economic contexts of the young people into account & from this deriving an appropriate educational approach
  - Skill of adjusting approaches & methods based on [youth] research outcomes

## Skills



- Assesses the needs of the young people before or at the very beginning of the activity (and proceeds with tailored adjustments if needed)

- Involves the young people in designing the programme, where possible
- Considers & applies the principles of non-formal learning when designing the programme with a particular focus on 'youth-centredness', 'transparency', 'democratic values', 'participation', 'empowerment' & 'social transformation'
- Keeps an eye on the objectives of the activity & the young people's needs
  - Deals with programme-related ambiguity
  - Deals with unexpended elements & dimensions that influence the development of the programme
  - Is willing to challenge the values behind the programmes
  - Sees the young person in a holistic way



## Knowledge

- Knowledge of the values & key principles of non-formal learning
- Knowledge of the socio-political & economic contexts of young people
  - Knowledge of project management processes
- Knowledge of different educational methods & concepts; knowing how to tailor & apply these to respective needs
- Knowledge of assessment practices in non-formal learning
  - Knowledge of appropriated methods of transferring knowledge to young people
  - Knowledge about value systems & related mechanisms
    - Knowledge of how to apply research into practice



## Behaviours

### 3 Organising and managing resources

...means understanding the values and working culture of youth projects and youth organisations. The youth worker understands the factors that influence such projects and organisations and that these are even more varied in the context of international collaboration. The youth worker identifies leadership styles and assesses the impact he/she has on the target groups during an activity. He/she understands what motivates young people to take part in projects, how to nurture this motivation and manage risks accordingly. This competence also includes knowledge of national legislation and financial resources management..

- Willingness to take on tasks that perhaps are not normally a part of one's role

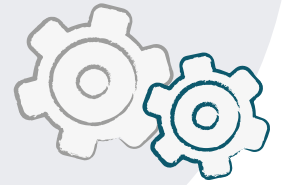
- Readiness to be challenged with regard to leadership styles
- Readiness to share & to be open about one's own intentions
- Readiness for continued learning, e.g. on financial management
  - Sincere interest in the young people's well-being
  - Awareness of one's own competences and resources
  - Readiness to work on becoming an 'inspirational leader'



## Attitudes

- Knowing how to apply human resources management tools to non-formal learning settings & to specific target groups
- Ability of using an inspirational leadership approach
- Skill of adjusting programme elements to resources management
- Knowing how to empower young people to organise & manage resources
  - Ability to manage/deal with frustrations, conflicts cc& risks
- Ability to work with diverse groups in a non-formal learning context
  - Strength in knowing how to foster collaboration among the members of the group, while taking their [individual] surrounding environment into account

## Skills



- Knowledge of human resources management & inspirational leadership
  - Knowledge about system dynamics & systemic approaches to human relations
- Knowledge of emotional mechanisms in groups & with individuals
- Knowledge of the target groups & their surrounding community (e.g. friends, family, colleagues, etc.)
- Where relevant, knowledge of financial management (with a focus on projects/programmes)
  - Where relevant, knowledge of fundraising
  - Where relevant, knowledge of relevant policy & legislation on specific topics (e.g. health)

## Knowledge



- Demonstrates self-management skills

- Develops programmes or activities based on a needs and opportunities analysis, including socialising activities
- Builds and maintains a good relationship with individuals and the entire group of young people, taking their environment into account
  - Provides support for young people to take risks
  - Acknowledges and celebrates young people's efforts
    - Recruits and manages volunteer and paid staff
  - Pays particular attention to the young people's well-being
    - Fundraises and manages financial resources
- Encourages and supports young people in managing resources – if possible in an environmentally-friendly way

## Behaviours



## 4 Collaborating successfully in teams

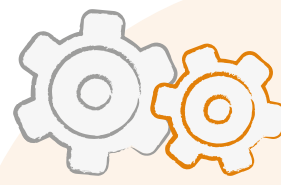
...means that the youth worker contributes to team work and maintains good working relations with everyone involved with the project. The youth worker motivates and supports colleagues in achieving given objectives. This competence area also includes systemic cooperation and responsibility in an international context.

- Willingness to take on tasks that are not normally a part of one's role but that will ensure safety for the team and the group
- Being open to & ready for new challenges
  - Readiness for continued learning
- Being open to different sources of learning
- Being aware of one's own competences
- Being aware of how much others can teach you & of the principles of 'to get and to give'
  - Readiness to reflect upon & rethink one's own role
  - Readiness to ask for support and to admit personal limitations in the context of the activity/group
  - Readiness to support colleagues' learning needs
- Being aware that one is a role model, both as an individual & as a team

## Attitudes

## Knowledge

- Knowledge about team work mechanisms in different contexts & of the possible outcomes of different approaches
- Knowledge about one's personal limitations & how to overcome them
  - Knowledge about coaching methods
  - Knowledge how to deal with emotions
- Knowledge about conflict prevention and transformation
  - Knowledge about feedback techniques (how to give feedback, how to receive it, etc.)
- Knowledge regarding individual vs. collective interests & focuses



## Skills

- Mastering methods and techniques that support a clear & fair division of roles and responsibilities
- Ability to contextualise and conceptualise team work practices with the principles of non-formal learning
- Ability to match team members' competences to the objectives of the activity and to the young peoples' profiles
  - Ability to foster collaboration among the team members
  - Ability to deal well with crisis/conflicts in the team
- Ability to work with various approaches, e.g. co-vision, supervision, collegial feedback, and cooperation
  - Ability to develop a continued learning plan for oneself
  - Ability to deal with emotions

- Promotes communication & collaboration amongst the team members to nurture qualities & deal with resistance
- Identifies diversity, strengths & weaknesses in the team
  - Requests and offers support where needed
- Ensures that knowledge, skills, styles & preferences in the team are shared & communicated
  - Deepens knowledge of particular topics/issues
- Coaches colleagues – where possible and requested – based on the approach of non-formal learning
  - Helps build team spirit & trust
  - Demonstrates empathy
  - Acts authentically
  - Applies feedback techniques
- Allocates adequate resources & time to team building
- Steers collective and individual emotions in a positive direction
- Receives & expresses criticism in an open, respectful & constructive way
  - Deals with frustration in a constructive manner

## Behaviours



## 5 Communicating meaningfully with others

...means building positive relationships with individuals and groups. The youth worker is a master in interacting well with young people as well as with international partners and contributes to smooth communication regarding programmes and projects. Communication is one of the key aspects of youth work. This competence area goes beyond simple communication models and tools. The youth worker also constructively handles emotions, inspiration, intuition, empathy and personalities.



- Openness to expressions of feelings & emotions (one's own & others')
- Readiness to challenge oneself & others
- Readiness to take a step back & reflect (e.g. on one's own perceptions, understanding, feelings)
- Being aware of the unique yet complex approach to one's identity & how to deal with it when working in a group
  - Sensitivity & openness to diversity
- Willingness to learn about the backgrounds/ contexts/realities of the young people

## Attitudes

## Knowledge

- Knowledge of the different dimensions & elements of active listening & non-verbal communication
- Knowledge of empathy-related mechanisms
  - Being up-to-date on current concepts & theories with regard to diversity
- Knowing about the different dimensions of identity
- Knowing various methods & approaches in working with different groups of people



- Ability to actively listen
- Being able to encourage sharing & mutual support within the group
- Knowing how to develop, adapt & apply methods that support awareness of one's own identity & its intrinsic elements
- Ability to demonstrate empathy in a way that others can learn from it
- Ability to deal with emotions and to ask for support when needed
- Ability to speak in another language than one's mother tongue, where needed

## Skills



## Behaviours

- Matches knowledge, theories & experiences to the reality & the identities in the group (explicitly or implicitly)
- Listens carefully to others, without judgement, interruption &, if possible, in an unbiased manner
  - Is attentive to body language
- Demonstrates understanding of what sparks emotions & how to deal with this accordingly
- Identifies feelings and emotions & understands their impact on others
- Addresses others' unexpressed concerns, feelings, or interests
  - Is transparent about his/her personal emotional state & shares thoughts in a simple manner
- Creates a safe environment where feelings & emotions can be freely and respectfully expressed





## 6 Displaying intercultural competence

...is the ability to support successful communication and collaboration among people from different cultural contexts and backgrounds. The youth worker has to address and deal with attitudes and behaviours behind this intercultural competence in [international] training and youth work. He/she approaches 'culture' from an identity perspective and understands ambiguity, human rights, self-confidence, acceptance versus own limits, and how geopolitical conflicts influence one's understanding of these aspects. The youth worker takes these intercultural dimensions into account in their work.

## Attitudes



- Being open towards the unexpected and towards ambiguity in the group & in the learning process
- Openness and willingness to look at identity, culture & related aspects from different perspectives
- Readiness to confront others and be confronted in a respectful & constructive way
- Willingness to support & empower individuals and groups
- Being careful not use methods which implicitly reinforce stereotypes and discrimination mechanisms
  - Being aware that culture is a dynamic & multifaceted process

## Skills



- Being able to deal with ambiguity & change
- Being able to deal with tension & conflict
- Ability to raise awareness about each other within the group
- Ability to work with interrelated dimensions of culture and identity
  - Being able to initiate critical reflection
- Being able to address human rights topics through different methods (human rights education)
- Being able to recognise discrimination & to understand the related mechanisms in order to react properly
- Being able to conceptualise, apply, analyse, synthesise & evaluate information about or in the group
- Being able to speak at least one foreign language

## Knowledge

- Knowledge of the notions & concepts of acceptance of ambiguity & change
- Knowledge of identity-related mechanisms & theories (with a focus on cultural contexts)
- Knowledge of the theories & concepts of power relations
- Knowledge of the mechanisms linked to stereotypical constructions of reality
- Knowledge of discrimination mechanisms & how to address them
- Knowledge of human rights, human rights education methods
  - Knowing how to speak at least one foreign language



## Behaviours



- Reflects on theories, concepts & experiences & applies these with regard to ambiguity & change
- Explicitly wrestles with his/her own biases, assumptions & behaviours regarding stereotypes
- Uses appropriate tools & methods to support the group in deconstructing & reconstructing reality (wrestling with stereotypes, prejudices, assumptions, etc.)
- Encourages young people to reflect on their own identity & related elements
- Explores the complex connections, among others, between identity, politics, society & history
  - Identifies and deals with issues of power in & with the group
- Facilitates awareness-raising with regard to conflicts that exist in the society & how they relate to intercultural dialogue
- Recognises and interprets words, body language & non-verbal communication in a culturally-appropriate manner
- Encourages self-confidence & demonstrates [a framed] flexibility in cultural & communicative behaviour
- Is willing to speak a foreign language & overcomes resistances and inhibitions
  - Encourages young people to reflect and exchange ideas regarding issues such as solidarity, social justice, promoting/protecting human rights, discrimination, dignity & equality

## 7 Networking and advocating

...involves developing and managing partnerships with other relevant actors. Youth work does not happen isolated from the rest of the world. Youth workers facilitate networking with others and advocate for the value of youth work. They are conscious about (political) values and beliefs at play in youth work and support young people in developing independent 'political thought'.



## Attitudes

- Willingness to collaborate with other actors & stakeholders
- Appreciation of the added value of new partnership & collaboration opportunities
- Being careful regarding young people's safety & well-being (and of all people who are involved)
- Readiness to allow being confronted with other views & work approaches
- Readiness to accept compromise while guaranteeing young people's interests & rights



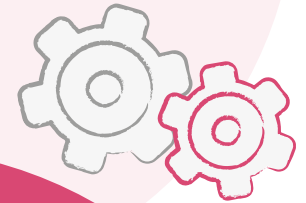
## Knowledge

- Knowledge about youth policy & youth work in one's own context (community, region, etc.)
- Knowledge of the socio-economic background of the young people
  - Knowledge about youth rights
  - Knowledge about mobility-related regulations regarding young people
- Knowledge about media & promotion mechanisms with regard to youth work, including digital tools for networking & collaboration
  - Knowledge of advocacy approaches & methods in a youth work context

- Being able to identify relevant partners in different environments (especially in an international setting)

- Being able to identify & name the European/international dimension in one's work
- Ability to network with a variety of external systems and actors
- Ability to transfer/communicate & share the learning potential of international mobility experiences
- Ability to identify underlying power relations & mechanisms & to assess the consequences
  - Ability to research & access relevant information
  - Ability to use media in an appropriate manner; being aware of their possible influence

## Skills



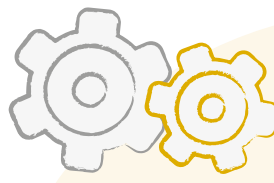
- Supports partnerships with other actors
- Takes a pro-active role in networking with other actors & organisations/structures in line with the interest of the young people
- Takes a pro-active role in working on the political dimension of networking, making steps towards concrete actions
- Promotes & explains the [learning] potential of international mobility experiences
- Transfers/shares knowledge of youth & social rights & related formal regulations with potential partners & the young people
- Where relevant, overcomes resistance to new partnerships through assessing the potential of that given partnership
- Addresses power relations in a way that primarily focuses on the interest of the young people
- Deals with & uses media in a careful manner, ensuring the safety & rights of young people



## Behaviours

## 8 Developing evaluative practices to assess and implement appropriate change

Youth workers work on helping and empowering young people, the environment, and society to change for the better – supporting the development of collective actions that stimulate change and transformation. Youth workers support actions that change policy and practice.



## Skills

- Being able to identify the most appropriate evaluative approach with regard to the needs of the young people & to the objectives of the activity
- Skill of ensuring that the impact assessment of the young people's needs suit the objectives identified
- Skills to write reports & to present them to diverse audiences
- Ability to work with both quantitative & qualitative information/data
  - Ability to interpret information/data according to the context of the activity
- Ability to plan an experience's follow-up while taking into account the outcomes of the programme/project

- Openness to different evaluation & [self-] assessment approaches in non-formal learning environments
- Readiness to learn about evaluation & assessment
- Readiness to be challenged & challenge other with regard to transformation
  - Interest in processes of change
- Readiness to present & share the outcomes of a programme/project with a wider audience
- Being aware of the fact that no information/data is 100% reliable (with regard to its collection & use)



## Attitudes

## Knowledge

- processes, assessment mechanisms & tools
- Knowledge about where & how to secure adequate data/material for evaluation
- Knowledge about how to apply the different/chosen evaluation approaches to a non-formal learning context
  - Knowledge about quality assurance & what it includes
  - Knowledge of the different phases of impact assessment
- Knowledge of ICT-related techniques with regard to assessment & evaluation
- Knowledge of what can generate change & of how to adjust the dissemination & use of results accordingly
- Knowledge of different methods to collect data
  - Knowledge about current [youth] research which can support the evaluative process



- Plans & applies a range of participative methods of assessment & evaluation
  - Develops adequate assessment approaches
- Verifies that the outcomes of an evaluation properly match the methods used for the evaluation design & impact assessment
- Deals explicitly with the notion of change & transformation
  - Supports young people in challenging their views & capacity to envision next steps
- Encourages creativity when dealing with the follow-up of a given experience
- Demonstrates skills in report writing and presentations geared towards a variety of audiences
- Defines appropriate ways to collect relevant information/data
  - Uses findings to influence practice
  - Interprets information/data according to the profile & contexts of young people
- Where relevant, uses ICT to support the assessment & evaluation process, or the data analysis



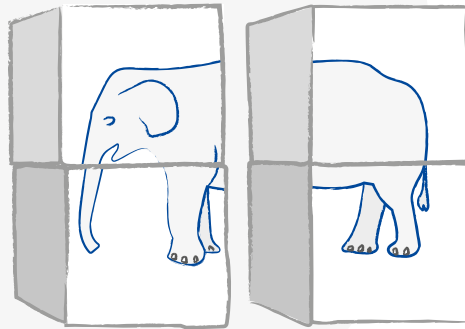
## Behaviours

DIVIDING AN  
ELEPHANT

IN HALF,

DOES NOT  
PRODUCE  
TWO SMALL

ELEPHANTS.



*The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization, Senge, P. 1990*

# Developing quality support measures

If we want to use the [Competence Model for Youth Workers to Work Internationally](#) to develop quality support measures, we need to give special attention to a series of elements. Harvey and Green (1993) listed the following elements in their Total Quality Management (TQM)<sup>4</sup>:

1. Ethics
2. Integrity
3. Trust
4. Training (process, contents and methodology)
5. Full involvement and participation of the learner
6. Quality culture and approach
7. Recognition
8. Communication (including partnerships)

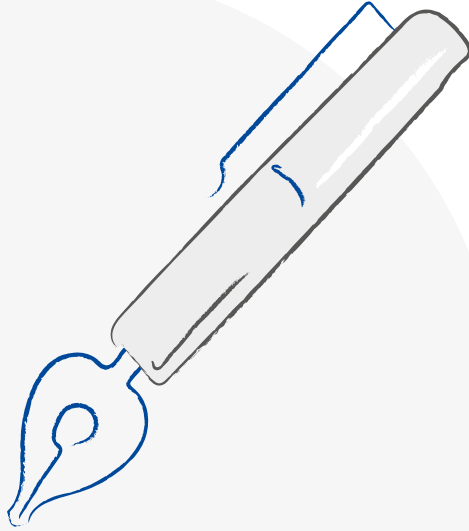
This goes in line with the principles of non-formal learning as developed by Helmut Fennes and Hendrik Otten in [Quality in non-formal education and training in the field of European youth work](#) (2008).

Any assessment mechanisms should take the elements above into consideration. However, competences evolve and depend on their context. So any curriculum and quality standard is bound to be biased – no matter whether you use self or external assessment. Within youth work, we therefore recommend integrating other dimensions in quality assessment than only quality standards and indicators. We prefer a holistic and systemic approach to quality.

<sup>4</sup>Initially developed by W. Edwards Deming, Joseph. M. Juran and Armand V. Feigenbaum (1989), and later revised by Cua, McKone and Schroeder (2001) in their nine common Total Quality Management (TQM) practices.



**ACTIONS**  
SPEAK  
LOUDER  
THAN  
**WORDS.**



# Glossary of terms

## Competences

The term 'competences' refers to a system of values, attitudes and beliefs, and skills and knowledge that can be applied in practice to manage various complex situations and tasks successfully. Confidence, motivation and well-being are important prerequisites for someone wishing to successfully apply developed competences.

## Formal education

Formal education is a form of purpose-driven learning that takes place in a distinct institutionalised environment. This environment is designed for teaching/training and learning, is staffed by qualified and examined educators, is geared towards specific topics and levels, and usually serves a clearly defined category of learners (age, level and specialisation). Formal education (and hence formal learning) is organised and formalised by means of national curricula. Formal education is built up in a way that allows successful students to move up to the next level and obtain a corresponding degree, diploma or certificate. Typical formal education institutions include primary and secondary schools, vocational colleges and universities. Most formal learning is compulsory.

## Identity

Identity is understood as a cluster of elements and dimensions that define an individual at certain times and in certain situations, contexts and settings. Identity encompasses not only dimensions such as gender, sex, persona, culture and ethnicity, but also includes processes such as identity (personality) change and social transformation. Developing ones' identity is a dynamic process.

## Informal learning

Informal learning is not necessarily purpose-driven and is generally unstructured (i.e. it lacks defined learning objectives, predetermined learning settings or educational materials). Informal learning takes place in everyday contexts in the family, at work, during leisure time and within the community. While informal learning does have outcomes, these are rarely recorded, virtually never certified, and are typically not immediately visible to the learner. These informal learning outcomes do not necessarily have an inherent value for formal education, training or employment purposes.

### Intercultural competence

Intercultural competence as developed and demonstrated within the framework of youth work includes a set of qualities that people need so they can live in contemporary, pluralistic societies. It enables them to actively confront social injustice and discrimination and promote and protect human rights. Intercultural competence requires an understanding of culture as a dynamic, multifaceted process. In addition, it calls for an increased sense of solidarity that allows individuals to negotiate their insecurity and fear of the 'other' e.g. through critical thinking, empathy and by accepting ambiguity.

### Quality

In the framework of this competence profile, quality is to be understood as encompassing dimensions such as ethos and coherence, adherence to defined objectives, change, and innovation.

### Quality of training in the youth field

Training quality plays an essential role in promoting the recognition of non-formal education and youth work; the role of trainers and of training for trainers is thus essential. The criteria pertaining to training in the youth field represent agreements on which existing training courses in the youth field are based. These criteria may include the following:

- The training is based on the values and principles of non-formal learning
- The training is aligned with the evidence-based knowledge about mutual needs of learners and society and promotes a defined set of competences
- The training responds to the needs, competences [abilities] and the individuality of learners and leaves room for both expected and unexpected outcomes
- The training is carefully planned and executed in terms of its educational impact and practical organisation
- Sufficient resources are made available in advance, and are employed in a clearly results-oriented and efficient manner
- The training is evaluated based on jointly agreed criteria
- Its results/outcomes are recognised and visible

### Quality of trainers

The quality of trainers – i.e., their professional expertise combined with their ability to perform within an educational framework – has a crucial impact on the quality of the training activities they deliver. For stakeholders and training organisations, composing a team of trainers who are able to function and deliver according to expectations ought to be

a permanent concern. Trust and transparency are of particular importance in this process. Special attention must be paid to the ability of each trainer and to the importance of the smooth functioning of a given team of trainers. It must hence be ensured that all areas of competence relevant for the educational activity in question are addressed, that the individual trainers can work together as a team, and that the necessary sex/gender and geographical balances are safeguarded.

### **Learner**

A learner is a participant in the learning process. The training is always targeted towards the learner and his/her competences are developed through it. The terms 'training participant' or 'trainee' are often used as synonyms.

### **Learning**

Learning is a process that results in permanent social transformation and change in a learner's competences and actions. Learning allows them to become a more experienced, self-aware and self-directed individual. Based on Kolb's experiential learning cycle, one of the learning cycles that can be observed in many youth work situations encompasses the following four steps: observe, stop, reflect, and adapt.

### **Meaningfulness**

In this model we use the term meaningfulness as the capacity to clearly express an emotion or an idea with or without words. Meaningfulness also refers to something that is important, that has a value (for a person, for a group of persons) and that relates to a purpose. For some, meaningfulness goes hand in hand with the notion of mindfulness, meaning the ability to remain fully present and aware in the 'here and now', acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations in a non-judgmental manner.

### **Non-formal learning**

Non-formal learning is a targeted learning process that supports the development of an individual: their social transformation, potential, creativity, talents, initiative and social responsibility as well as the acquisition of relevant knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. It is understood as a form of learning that takes place outside institutional contexts (e.g. school). Non-formal learning in youth work settings is often structured, based on learning objectives, takes place during a certain period of time, involves specific learning support, and is intentional and voluntary. Non-formal learning is based on a series of educational values and principles.

### Principles of non-formal learning

The principles of non-formal learning are agreements on which the organisation of non-formal learning is based: a focus on the learner and their development; transparency; confidentiality; voluntariness; participation; ownership; and democratic values.

### Trainers in the youth field

'Trainer' is traditionally used to refer to those who shape, guide and accompany the learning processes of individuals or groups. In the youth field, trainers design and implement educational activities based on the values and principles of youth work and non-formal learning, they create conditions that promote the learners' individual development, and they shape the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary for youth work.

### Training in the youth field

Training in the youth field means a targeted educational activity based on the principles and values of youth work and non-formal learning. Training in this area is targeted at young people and those who create the conditions for young people to engage in activities that foster their individual development (youth workers, youth trainers, public officials, leaders, counsellors, etc.). They do so by supporting the development of young people in various ways and by promoting the acquisition of the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that are necessary for quality youth work.

### Values in non-formal learning

'Values in non-formal learning' means a set of convictions and beliefs that guide the choices and approaches applied in non-formal learning. In the youth field, the values of non-formal learning are connected to personal development (e.g., independence, critical thinking, openness, curiosity, creativity), social development (e.g., the ability to interact, participative democracy, solidarity and social justice, responsibility, problem-solving) and ethics (e.g., acceptance of others, human rights, intercultural learning, intercultural dialogue, peace and non-violent behaviour, gender equality, and intergenerational dialogue).

### Youth and young people

The UN probably has the most flexible definition of youth: 'YOUTH is best understood as a period of transition from the dependence of childhood to adulthood's independence. That's why, as a category, youth is more fluid than other fixed age-groups. Yet, age is the easiest way to define this group, particularly in relation to education and employment, because "youth" is often referred to a person between the ages of leaving compulsory education, and finding their first job'.

From a psychological perspective, young people are persons in the age range of 20 to 35, although youth starts earlier if we include the period of adolescence. Erik Erikson (1959) distinguishes the following stages of psychosocial development: the young adult stage (from 13 to 39) precedes early adulthood (from 20 to 39) and this precedes middle adulthood (from 40 to 64). Daniel Levinson (1978) and Rhona Rapoport (1980) add that '[...] for a variety of reasons, timeliness on young adulthood cannot be exactly defined – producing different results according to the different mix of overlapping indices (legal, maturational, occupational, sexual, emotional and the like) employed, or on whether a developmental perspective [... or] the socialisation perspective is taken'. For Erikson, the psychological crisis during adolescence is about 'fidelity'. Young people ask themselves the existential question: 'Who am I and what can I be?' They learn to position themselves in relationship with others.

Neuroscience defines adolescence as the **'[...] period between the physical changes during puberty and the capacity of an individual to play an independent role in society'** (Sarah-Jayne Blakemore, 2008).

### Youth work

Youth work is an extra-curricular field of work, in that it involves specific leisure activities and is based on non-formal and informal learning processes and on voluntary participation. It promotes young people's development in a multi-faceted manner, enabling them to become active outside their families, formal education, and work. Youth work activities and processes are self-managed, co-managed or managed under the guidance of educational staff (either full-time or voluntary youth workers and youth leaders) and can develop and change in line with various dynamics. Youth work is organised and delivered in different ways (e.g., by youth-led organisations, youth organisations and informal groups, and by youth services and public authorities) and is shaped at the local, regional, national and European level.

### Youth workers

Youth workers work with young people in a wide variety of non-formal and informal learning contexts, typically focusing on their young charges' personal and social development through one-on-one relationships and group-based activities. While acting as trainers/facilitators may be their main task, it is just as likely for youth workers to take a socio-educational or social work-based approach. In many cases, these roles and functions overlap.

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