



Nine Competence Areas

The Competence Model for Youth Workers to Work Internationally acknowledges that youth work is becoming more and more European and international. It focuses on competences needed to prepare, implement and evaluate learning mobility projects.

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

The model understands competences as an overall system of values, attitudes, beliefs as well as skills and knowledge that we use to successfully manage complex situations and tasks.

We chose a multi-dimensional approach for this competence model.



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The competence model consists of the following nine competence areas:

- Facilitating learning
- Designing programmes
- Managing resources
- Collaborating in teams
- Communicating meaningfully
- Displaying intercultural sensitivity
- Networking and advocating
- Assessing and evaluating
- Being civically engaged



Four Learning Dimensions



Facilitating learning



...means facilitating individual and group learning, as well as establishing dialogue and ensuring cooperation with individuals, groups and communities. This requires youth workers to support young people in identifying and pursuing their learning needs and to then use methods, methodologies and digital tools accordingly. Youth workers actively support young people's learning processes and motivation.

Attitudes



- Supporting young people in their learning processes depends on the position youth workers take about learners and learning.
- Appropriate methods need to be chosen and/or developed to be used in an activity.
- Youth workers are willing to reflect about themselves and the way they work.
- Youth workers provide accessible spaces for all young people – especially in online-settings.

Skills



- Carefully chosen approaches and methods need to fit the purpose of the activity and the young people's needs.
- Learning also happens through reflection and emotional support.
- Working with resources is needed for the learning process of youth workers.
- Learning processes have a solidarity dimension and can also have an impact on communities.

Knowledge



- Knowledge about youth work, non-formal learning and its principles guides us to facilitate group and learning processes.
- The dynamic of a group in a learning setting can be emotionally charged and challenging.
- Becoming knowledgeable about methods, methodology and developments requires looking for appropriate sources and resources.

Behaviours



- Supporting young people in their learning processes means above all to motivate and empower them.
- Youth workers encourage interaction within the group.
- Youth workers develop an approach to reach the aims and objectives of the learning process.
- Learning environments need youth workers to show a certain flexibility to adapt to the learners' needs.



Designing programmes



...involves a good understanding of the different groups and environments that youth workers operate in. Youth workers apply non-formal learning values and principles in the programmes and respond to the needs and realities of young people, which are more complex in an international context.

Attitudes



- Programmes need to be designed with a focus on the learners.
- Ambiguity and 'the unexpected' are part of the reality of non-formal learning.
- Different educational approaches and new developments are important for the practice of non-formal education.

Skills



- The needs and backgrounds of the learners influence the design of programmes.
- Non-formal learning programmes need to foster learners' motivation and engagement.
- The diversity that groups represent requires further skills from youth workers.
- It is desirable that programmes also have an impact on communities and social environments.
- Additionally, research and other concepts may influence the work of youth workers.
- The digital dimension also requires skills.

Knowledge



- Certain criteria and conditions influence the programme design.
- Learners' background and experiences influence how youth workers set up their programmes.
- Transferring theoretical knowledge to practice is another challenge youth workers face.
- Technological and digital issues are also part of education and youth work.

Behaviours



- Youth workers do learner-centered work
- Youth workers both work towards aims and objectives of a project and critically evaluate them.
- Consider 'surprises' as part of the flow of processes.
- Youth workers need to show agility and pro-actively include the digital dimension when designing programmes.



Managing resources



...means understanding the values and working culture of youth projects and youth organisations. Youth workers identify leadership styles and assess the impact they have on the target groups during an activity. They understand what motivates young people to take part in projects. They consider what is needed to make a stronger impact on the wider community.

Attitudes



- Personal development and learning are part of organising and managing resources.
- It is helpful to look at possible impacts and interact with participants and others in certain ways during a project.

Knowledge



- There is a need for some background knowledge of the factors that influence projects and how to deal with them.
- Programmes and projects need budgets and financial management to be realised.
- In order to realise programmes and projects, resources are crucial.
- Legislation and policies are two other important factors.

Skills



- The way in which a project is managed influences its success.
- The motivation of participants keeps projects alive and lively.
- Successful interaction and communication are essential for dealing with resources.

Behaviours

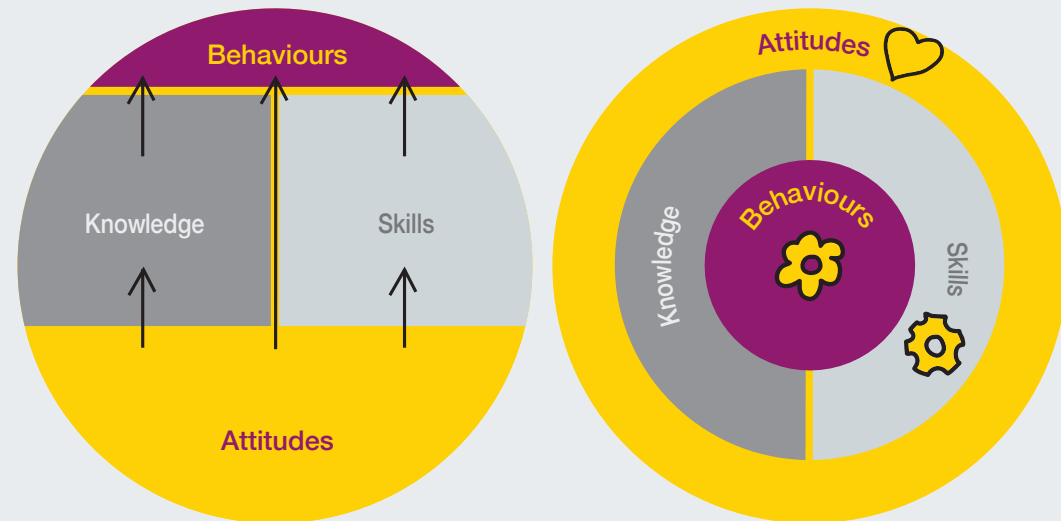


- Youth workers consider the needs of young people and other indirect beneficiaries.
- Youth workers are required to involve and encourage young people to take on an active role.
- The key focus is not only on ensuring new resources, but also on capitalising on the existing ones.
- Youth workers demonstrate self-management skills.



Explore the Learning Dimensions

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.



Collaborating in teams



...means that youth workers contribute to team work and maintain good working relations with everyone involved with the project. Youth workers motivate and supports colleagues in achieving given objectives. This competence area also includes systemic cooperation and responsibility in an international context.



Communicating meaningfully



...means building positive relationships with individuals and groups. Youth workers are masters in interacting with young people as well as with international partners and contribute to smooth communication regarding programmes and projects. Communication is a key aspect of youth work. This area is also about how the youth worker constructively handles emotions, inspiration, intuition, empathy and personalities.

Attitudes



- As part of a team, youth workers have roles, take on duties and have certain responsibilities.
- To interact within the team and with the group is another aspect of one's role.
- As individuals, team members learn and develop continuously.
- Also, supporting the development of colleagues in teams contributes to successful collaboration.

Knowledge



- Knowledge about processes in teams helps us to collaborate successfully.
- The individuals and their interaction play an important role in team work.
- Communication and problem solving are essential for collaboration in a team.

Attitudes



- Youth workers deal with the various ways persons act and are, and how they show their feelings.
- The fact that there is always diversity in groups requires further attitudes.
- Relationships and solidarity with individuals and groups are prerequisites for meaningful communication.

Knowledge



- Knowledge of theoretical concepts supports communication with a diversity of people in various situations.
- Youth workers need to know various methods and approaches towards working with different groups of people.

Skills



- Roles and responsibilities have to be shared within a team.
- Cooperation and collaboration are essential for good team work.
- Working together in a team is intense: challenges, feelings and crisis may occur.
- Youth workers are themselves continuously learning and developing.

Behaviours



- Building a team requires its members to show sensitivity and support.
- Working on and with the competences in the team increases the qualities of the work.
- In case of unexpected/unpleasant situations, it is needed that youth workers both handle and pro-actively engage with them
- Resources and time are also needed for team building and teamwork.

Skills



- Some skills that youth workers need relate to feelings, emotions and deeper awareness.
- Support and encouragement are needed in order to create a space for meaningful communication.
- Also, language matters!
- The digital world of information and communication is an indispensable part of non-formal education.

Behaviours



- Investing in perception/understanding of how others behave contributes to meaningful communication.
- Self-reflection is another aspect of importance in communication processes.
- Interpreting and (re-) acting shapes the atmosphere in which communication takes place.
- To apply new knowledge to youth workers' daily work, it is important to link theory and practice.



Displaying intercultural sensitivity



...is the ability to support successful communication and collaboration among people from different cultural contexts and backgrounds. Youth workers have to deal with diverse attitudes and behaviours in [international] training and youth work and tackle underlying values. Youth workers take different intercultural dimensions into account in their work.

Attitudes



- Ambiguity is part of intercultural experiences.
- The backgrounds of people influence how they express their identities and look at others.
- Aspects of identity and culture can lead to challenging power relations, discrimination and conflicts.

Knowledge



- Identity-related aspects and ambiguity are at the heart of intercultural processes.
- Power, discrimination and other political issues are important for this competence area.
- Approaches and methods are needed to deal with challenges and to stimulate learning processes.
- Another factor here is language.

Skills



- Youth workers handle identity-related aspects within groups and between individuals.
- Interaction in (diverse) groups can be challenging in many aspects.
- To deal methodically with intercultural group processes and how diversity is handled in our societies.

Behaviours



- (Self-) reflection is important when working with people and dealing with processes within diverse groups.
- Analysing and interpreting are important aspects when working with group processes.
- Youth workers use methods and tools to facilitate intercultural processes.
- Encouraging and supporting participants in reflection and during their learning processes is crucial.
- International youth work settings ask youth workers to be willing to speak a foreign language.



Attitudes



are the way a person views and approaches something. Alternative terms could be manner, disposition, feeling, posture, position, etc. Attitudes can also be seen as a tendency or orientation of the mind. They tell us something about how people feel about and deal with situations and individuals...

Knowledge



can be defined as an understanding of or the possession of the information about a certain subject, which someone can obtain through experience, research or study. It can also mean being acquainted with facts or principles. Finally, knowledge in the context of non-formal learning may also mean "awareness"...





Networking and advocating



...involves developing and managing partnerships with other relevant actors. Youth work does not happen in isolation from the rest of the world. Youth workers facilitate networking with others (in their community and outside it) 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 a capacity for independent political thought.

Attitudes



- Partnerships are at the core of networks.
- Collaboration also needs negotiation and agreement.
- Keeping an eye on the well-being of everyone involved in a project is very important.

Knowledge



- Knowledge about structures, priorities and processes in youth policy is needed in order to network and advocate.
- Knowing about the needs of young people helps youth workers to understand how to support solidarity.
- Tools and media are useful channels for networking and advocating.

Skills



- It is crucial for networking to find partners and to understand the systems in which it can take place.
- Advocacy needs communication in order to reach out to the community, stakeholders and potential supporters.
- Within networks, power relations between partners are of importance.

Behaviours



- Advocating and networking benefit from youth workers taking a pro-active role and approach.
- Youth workers should be willing to confront scepticism and resistances to cooperation and show inspiring conviction.
- Youth workers bring to the surface and discuss questions around power, privilege and solidarity.
- Media and digital tools offer opportunities for advocacy and networking. It is important to be mindful of how they are used.



Assessing and evaluating



... means developing evaluative practices to assess and implement appropriate change. Youth workers work to help and empower young people, the environment, and society to change for the better – supporting the development of collective and solidarity actions that stimulate change and transformation. Youth workers support actions that change policy and practice. This section also requires them to pay attention to the data gathered through online and digital tools.

Attitudes



- Approaches and tools for assessment and evaluation are needed for implementing change.
- Youth workers contribute to processes of change.
- Outcomes of evaluation help to develop the practice of youth work and can be disseminated to generate change.

Knowledge



- Youth workers need knowledge about theory/ background of assessment and evaluation.
- Youth workers benefit from tools and methods for different stages in assessment and evaluation processes.
- It is helpful to have an overview about current youth research and of how to use results.

Skills



- Approaches to and tools for evaluation have to be carefully chosen.
- Youth workers deal with and manage data.
- Results need to be disseminated and youth workers can make use of them.

Behaviours



- A belief in young peoples' ability to engage and participate is crucial to what youth workers do.
- Civic engagement calls for curiosity, reflection and awareness of one's values and social status and generally of societal developments and politics.
- Civic engagement means action - to take a stance and to behave in the face of injustice and other political or societal issues



Being civically engaged



...means being aware of and taking a principled stance on political and societal issues affecting young people, challenging power dynamics, supporting value-based processes, co-creating with young people and encouraging their critical civic engagement in their communities, in Europe and beyond.

Attitudes



- A belief in young peoples' ability to engage and participate is crucial to what youth workers do.
- It is important to reflect on one's values and social status and generally on societal developments and politics.
- Engagement means to take a stance and to act in the face of injustice and other issues.

Knowledge



- Youth workers have to know how and where young people can participate and be aware of the obstacles and challenges to engagement.
- An awareness of political issues, their connections and impacts and information about policies and stakeholders is also important.

Skills

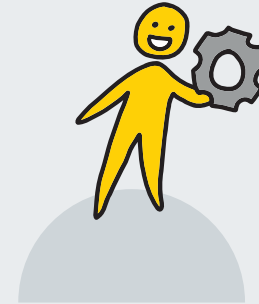


- Reflection is a core element of interaction with others and also of engagement.
- Young people need to have opportunities for participation and to trust in their capacity for engagement.
- Civic engagement calls for knowledge about (political) issues and information that is reliable and trustworthy.
- Dealing with different stakeholders helps offer opportunities for civic engagement.
- It is important to be aware of personal limits and to ensure the wellbeing of everyone involved.

Behaviours



- It is crucial to create diversity-aware spaces in which learning from each other, as well as cooperation and collaboration can take place.
- Youth workers need to face up to and overcome obstacles and minimise risks.
- (Self-) reflection and how one acts and presents oneself are the foundation of working towards civic engagement with young people



Skills



are defined as the ability or capacity to perform a task, to apply knowledge, and to turn attitudes into actions. Thus, they describe things that people can do well – also known as expertise. Skills are acquired or learned...

Behaviours



be defined as the way in which one acts or conducts oneself, especially towards others. Therefore, behaviour encompasses attitudes, knowledge, and skills. Through one's behaviour, we can assess the competencies level of the youth worker...

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

