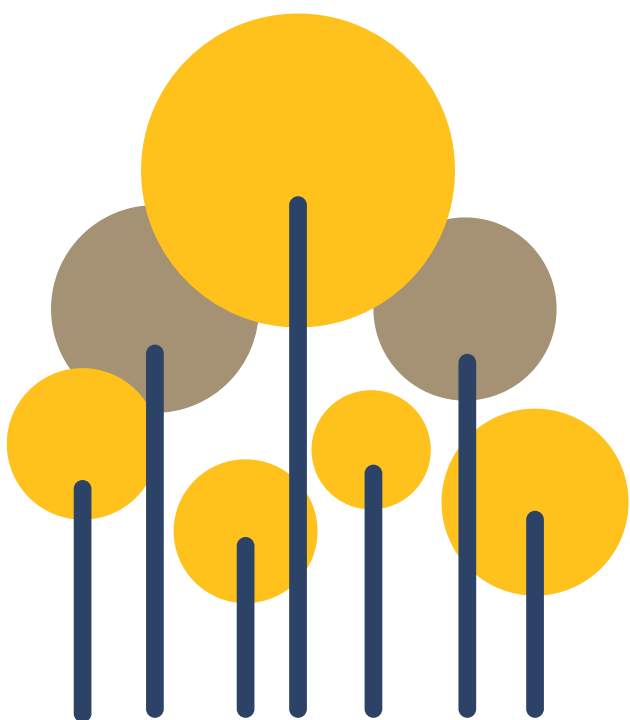


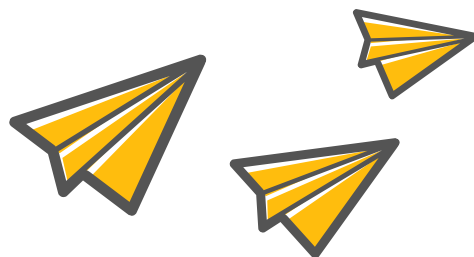
YOUTH WORK UPRISING BEYOND THE BORDERS

*Serbia and Estonia learning from
(and with) each other*



Authors:
ANA PECARSKI
DENIZ HOTI

INTRODUCTION¹



The document before you is one of the main outcomes of the international project “Youth work uprising beyond the borders”, implemented by the National Association of Youth Workers (NAPOR) Serbia and Estonian Youth Work Centre - Eesti Noorsootöö Keskus. The idea behind this project came after assessing common needs on improving the quality of youth work, area in which both partners are highly experienced, being central bodies on national level for development of youth work. Main focus of the publication will be to demonstrate the context of youth work, cooperation with youth field institutions and showcase examples of youth work practiced among the countries. Important parts of analysis will be oriented to explore challenges faced in each country from institutional framework to available methods and tools.

The project aims to introduce potential for improvement in youth work practices in both Serbia and Estonia by exchanging good practices, analyzing know-hows and creating recommendations on national level. This aims to create synergies between different sectors that have influence on young people, enhancing mutual strengths and recognition of youth work.

1. Provided by the National Association of Youth Workers (NAPOR) Serbia

Main outcomes of the project "Youth work - uprising beyond the borders" are:²

- Created recommendations and identified areas for improvement of national mechanisms regarding quality youth work, based on experience from study visits to Serbia and Estonia;
- Created evidence based proposal of new policy at national level that will be tailored to ensure sustainable system for youth work practice;
- Supported professional development of youth workers and their empowerment to introduce innovative methods and approaches into daily work and initiated youth workers programs and policies improvements on the level of local organizations and local public institutions represented by youth workers involved in the project.

Project results will significantly mark the strengthening investment, performance and efficiency priority, as it creates preconditions for innovative ways of ensuring sustainable investment of youth work through opening up public institutions for incorporation of youth work services. All of this leads towards systematic approach to youth care on local level.

The project is funded by the Tempus Foundation (Serbian National Agency) through the ERASMUS+ program.

CONTEXT

Historical context

Both Serbia and Estonia have rich history in care for youth and in both countries some forms of youth programs originate back from the 19th century. In Estonia, the legislation of youth work and education followed very soon and evolved rapidly during the first independence (1918-1940).³ The Youth Organisation Act (passed in 1936) defined youth as below 20 years of age. The Youth Organisation Act emphasizes the importance of support for youths' adaptation in life and states the necessity to create favourable conditions for the development of young people's knowledge, skills and talents.

"A number of legislative acts which regulate the youth work field were adopted from the beginning of the 1990s: the Hobby Schools Act (1995, revised in 2007), the Juvenile Sanctions Act (1998, no longer in force 2018), and the Youth Work Act (1999, revised in 2010 and in 2017)".⁴ According to the Youth Work Act young people are considered to between 7 and 26 of age.⁵ At the beginning of 2018 there were 276 800 young people.⁶

3. Taru M, Pilve E. and Kaasik P, "The history of youth work in Estonia"

4. Mai Beilmann, Country Sheet on Youth Work in Estonia, EU-Coe Youth Partnership

5. <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/516102017001/consolide/current>

6. Statistics Estonia



According to Local Government Organisation Act organizing youth work is the responsibility of the local governments.⁷ The youth affairs (youth policy) is one of the responsibilities of the Ministry of Education and Research (the department of youth affairs) and the implementation of youth policy and development of youth work is the task of Estonian Youth Work Centre, operating under the administrative authority of the Ministry.⁸ The following umbrella organizations are strategic partners⁹ for the ministry: The Union of Hobby Schools, The Union of Music Hobby Schools, Union of Art Hobby Schools, Estonian Association of Open Youth Centers, The Estonian Youth Council, The Association of Youth Workers, The Association of Sports in School, The Union of Dance Hobby Education, The Union of Science Hobby Education, Estonian Defence League Girls Organisation and Estonian Defence League Boys Organisation, The Estonian Debating Union, Estonian Union of Student Councils, Federation of Estonian Student Unions, Organisation of Outstanding Young People.

In Serbia, the legislation took much longer to develop, with a large gap during the 90s where youth work and youth activities happened very randomly and without any legislative and systematic support. The CSOs from Serbia formed Youth Coalition in 2003 and actively ran the campaign for raising awareness on the position of young people in the society and lack of support mechanisms. The Coalition implemented the blockade of the Serbian Government in May 2007, when over 16000 phone calls, over 4000 faxes and over 30000 emails were addressed to the Government with the same question: Who is in charge of youth? The blockage was successful in its mission to put the youth into the spotlight, and soon after it, The Ministry of Youth and Sport was established. The first National Youth Strategy was adopted in 2008. The Law on Youth was passed in 2011.¹⁰

7. Local Government Organisation Act <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/511022019003/consolide>

8. <https://www.hm.ee/en/activities/youth>

9. <https://dok.hm.ee/et/document.html?id=2d699d5c-d54a-4e37-a55d-049a3122c392&fbclid=IwAR3hI2KxJ3R2UWMqDNGAkDVe6Q0TsjllWjLtgfWT1aeXmb6tMOvWwt5zIAo>

10. Bojana Perović and Jelena Stojanović, Country sheet on youth work in Serbia, EU-Coe Youth Partnership https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47262550/Serbia_country_sheet_youth_work.pdf/b11d835b-2450-fa51-4da0-e9bda10ab0eb

Definition of youth work

In Serbian Law on Youth, youth work is defined as such youth activities organised by and for young people, based on non-formal education, carried out in young people's free time and undertaken with the aim of improving the conditions of personal and social development of young people, in accordance with their needs and abilities, in which young people voluntarily participate.¹¹

Serbian National Association of Youth Workers (NAPOR) has a more detailed definition of youth work: Youth work is planned educational curriculum, created with the purpose of providing support to young people in the process of independence, by helping youth in personal and social development to become active members of the society and participants in the decision-making process.

The idea of youth work is to create a safe environment and opportunities for active participation of young people on a voluntary basis in the process of acquiring skills, competencies and knowledge.¹² NAPOR's definition is explained in more detail in the handbook Dictionary of youth policy, created in 2015 as a joint effort of National Association of Youth Workers (NAPOR), National Youth Council of Serbia (KOMS), National Association of Youth Offices (NAKZM) and Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Serbia to more precisely define the main terms and actors of youth policy, as well as improve the mutual relations of all actors. The Dictionary thoroughly explains the clear difference between terms: youth work, working with youth and non-formal education, where youth work is in this context defined as a long-term process with three main pillars: preparation and motivation of young people to actively participate in the society, encouraging and continuously facilitating the reassessment of values and beliefs of young people, and encouraging and promoting of accepting and understanding others.¹³ The definition is widely accepted among NAPOR member organisations, but in the wider context there are still differences on how youth work is defined by different actors in Serbia.

11. Law on Youth of the Republic of Serbia http://www.mos.gov.rs/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Zakon_o_mladima.pdf

12. Guidelines for ensuring quality in youth work programmes, NAPOR http://www.napor.net/sajt/images/Dokumenta/NAPOR-smernice_za_osiguranje_kvaliteta_omladinskog_rada.pdf

13. Dictionary of youth policy, National Association of youth workers (NAPOR), National Youth Council of Serbia (KOMS), National Association of Youth Offices (NAKZM), Ministry of youth and sport of the Republic of Serbia <https://koms.rs/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Recnik-omladinske-politike.pdf>

Youth work is defined in the Estonian Youth Work Act as “the creation of conditions to promote the diverse development of young persons which enable them to be active outside their families, formal education acquired within the adult education system, and work on the basis of their free will”.¹⁴ According to the definition, youth work covers a wide range of activities which should enable young people to be active and develop outside the formal educational system. This definition emphasizes the non-formal learning process and the voluntary nature of youth work activities.

The organisation of youth work proceeds from the following principles which are stated in the Youth Work Act:¹⁵ youth work is performed for the benefit of and together with young people by involving them in the decision making process;

- youth work is performed for the benefit of and together with young people by involving them in the decision making process;
- upon creating the conditions for the acquisition of knowledge and skills, needs and interests of young people shall be proceeded from;
- youth work is based on the participation and free will of young people;
- youth work supports the initiative of young people;
- youth work proceeds from the principle of equal treatment, tolerance and partnership.

14. Youth Work Act

15. <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/Riigikogu/act/516102017001/consolide>



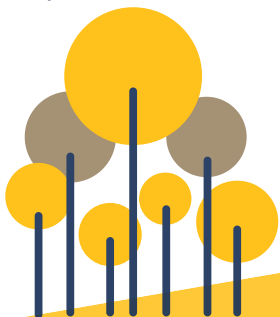
Who is youth?

One of the gamesetters in this context is the definition of a young person in both countries. Estonian Youth Work Act recognizes young people as aged between 7-26, while Serbian Law on Youth defines age limits as 15-30. The age gap is accompanied by the expected gap in activities and programmes; the Estonian youth work programmes are to a large extent revolving around creating safe spaces and providing the non-formal learning experience, while in Serbia youth work programmes orbit around adolescence and support through adolescence, questioning values and beliefs and active participation. Working with children is not considered youth work in Serbia, and there's almost a strict line between organisations working with children or organisations working with youth.

In European context, young people are persons 13 – 30 years old. For the purposes of European youth policies this age is used both by the European Commission and the Council of Europe.¹⁶

Youth workers from Serbia, especially those active in the field on the local level, raised the question of reframing the lower age limit. One of the main points have been that 15 might be too late to reach a young person, who already formed their habits and behaviour, and that reaching youth at an earlier age might lead to bigger and more meaningful involvement of young people in youth work programmes. This is emphasized as one of the main topics for further discussion after this project in the youth work field in the context of Serbia.

16. Council of Europe and European Commission Research Partnership: Report of the Research Seminar 'The Youth Sector and Non-formal Education/Learning: working to make lifelong learning a reality and contributing to the Third Sector', Strasbourg 28-30 April 2004.



Where youth work happens

While in Serbia youth workers in majority of cases operate in NGOs, with only a few of them active in Local Youth Offices, Estonia has mainstreamed youth worker as a profession. This has led to the much higher reach of Estonian youth programmes, something Serbia has been struggling with for the past years, especially having in mind the difficult situation of youth organisations (centralisation, project instead of program funding, irregular funding, unstable environment, lack of recognition...). The limited reach of youth work programmes is most visible in rural areas where there is no local NGOs and youth clubs.

In Estonia, beside open youth centres, youth workers are for example active in hobby schools, schools, youth associations, youth camps, libraries or museums. Youth workers are available to young people and implementing programmes in places where young people meet and spend their time. Hobby schools and open youth centres either belong in the structure of local municipality or are operated by NGOs. According to the Performance report of the Ministry of Education and Research in 2018 57% of young people were involved in youth work, and the profession is mainstreamed and recognized in other fields.



The main providers of youth work in Estonia:¹⁷

Hobby schools. In 2018 there were 750 hobby schools in Estonia that offer hobby education in sports, music, arts and many other areas of interest.

Youth Centers offer young people a wide range of activities and most operate on the basis of open youth work. In 2018 there were 280 youth centers in Estonia.

Youth associations. A youth association is a non-profit organization with two thirds of young people as members, and whose purpose is to organize and conduct youth work. It is estimated that 10% of young people participate in youth associations.

Youth and work education camps. Youth camps offer young people the opportunity to spend their summer holidays or school holidays in a healthy and meaningful way. Work education camps combine work and youth work opportunities. Each year, over 30, 000 young people participate in youth and work education camps.

Youth work in schools. Youth work in general education and vocational schools supports the achievement of the school curriculum objectives, is based on extracurricular activities and is organized by the school's youth worker, student council, hobby activity managers. Over 70, 000 young people participate in school hobby activities.

17. <https://www.hm.ee/en/activities/youth/youth-work>

Youth workers' paths

Youth workers are people who work with young people in a wide variety of non-formal and informal contexts, typically focusing on personal and social development through one-to-one relationships and in group-based activities. Being learning facilitators may be their main task, but it is at least as likely that youth workers take a social pedagogic or directly social work based approach. In many cases, these roles and functions are combined with each other.¹⁸

In Estonia, higher education can be acquired in youth work studies. The first youth worker training programme was launched in 1992.¹⁹ There have been BA-level youth work curricula in the University of Tartu, Narva College (applied higher education, four years) since 2004, BA-level curricula in leisure time manager-teacher (applied higher education) in the Viljandi Culture Academy of the University of Tartu, and BA-level youth work curricula in Tallinn University (applied higher education, three years) since 1994. Furthermore, there have been MA-level youth work management curricula in Tallinn University since 2015.²⁰

18. Chisholm, L. (2005): Bridges for Recognition Cheat Sheet: Proceedings of the SALTO Bridges for Recognition: Promoting Recognition of Youth Work across Europe, Leuven-Louvain.

19. Taru M. Pilve E. and Kaasik P. (2014), "The history of youth work in Estonia"

20. Mai Beilmann, Country Sheet on Youth Work in Estonia, EU-Coe Youth Partnership



Estonian Youth Work Centre is the awarding body in the field of youth work occupation. The Youth Work occupational certificate is valid for 5 years and can be revalidated max one year after the expiry. The professional qualifications are for all people working with young people and are not mandatory, but many municipalities have started to demand this certificate. Partial professional qualifications are mandatory in order to work in a youth camp. An occupational standard is a document that describes the set of skills, knowledge and dispositions, i.e. competence requirements, needed for successfully accomplishing job tasks. Occupational standards are used for compiling curricula and awarding qualifications. The profession of youth work includes the professions of youth worker, level 4, level 6 and level 7 according to The European Qualifications Framework. A level 4 youth worker focuses on individual youngsters and youth groups. Level 6 youth workers organize youth work and manage youth work organisation and establishments Level 7 youth workers develop the field of youth work on the local and national levels, manage work establishments, organisations and professional networks and supervise other youth workers.



In Serbia, one of the most comprehensive educational programmes for youth workers is a part of non formal education. The National Association of Youth Workers (NAPOR) created a curriculum for the education of youth workers,²¹ which contains a training programme for two vocational levels (Youth Leader and Youth Worker) and a mechanism for validation of previously attained competencies in youth work.²² (the process will be thoroughly explained in the continuation of this document). The educational programme is divided into modules and implemented by licenced member organisations. The curricula also recognizes third vocational level (Expert in Youth Work) but there is no mechanism for education or validation on national level.

NAPOR member organisation Centre for Youth Work (CZOR) in cooperation with Jönköping University from Sweden implements a formal education program for youth workers through University courses: Leadership and developmental youth work - A level (30 ECTS) and Leadership and developmental youth work in the community - B level (30 ECTS). "The uniqueness of CZOR lies in the fact that it is the only civic society organization in the Republic of Serbia providing formal education for youth workers."²³

The University of Novi Sad implemented a two-year programme of master vocational studies: Youth work in community (120 ESPB).

In 2019, youth worker as a vocation is officially classified in the national qualifications framework in Serbia,²⁴ but there is no official documentation passed yet on how one actually gains this status.

For youth workers from both Serbia and Estonia, there is a lot of educational opportunities in non-formal education programmes on European and wider level, through training courses, MOOCs, seminars etc, and these opportunities have been widely used for professionalisation and competence development in youth work.

21. Qualifications and classification for three occupational levels of youth workers, NAPOR

22. Another step towards licensing youth workers, NAPOR

23. CZOR website, accessed last time on 13. January 2020, at 8.50 am, link

24. Decision on the Uniform Codes for entering and encrypting data in the records in the field of work ("RS Official Gazette" No. 56/18)

GOOD PRACTICE IN THE YOUTH FIELD IN ESTONIA

Good practice in the youth field in Estonia is one of the world's most developed digital nations. Just in a time period of 20 years the small Baltic country successfully created an efficient and secure digital environment that influenced almost every aspect of everyday life. From paying taxes and online voting to applying for a digital ID or making an appointment with a doctor, E-Estonia has simple e-solution for everything.²⁵

The long-term goal of the Estonian governments is to create a “Zero-Bureaucracy”²⁶ state and „New digital nation”.²⁷ At the same time Estonia's entrepreneurs are making amazing impact all around the world with their „unicorns” (privately owned companies which worth more than \$ 1 billion) in the fields of transport, video games, communication and software development.

But how does such technological improvement affect youth work in Estonia?

The main goal of the next chapters is to briefly answer on an above question and to present some key learnings from study visit about open youth centers and hobby schools in Estonia and finally to share some information about youth work formal educational system in Estonia. As we move across next chapters and practices we shall see how Estonia creates great conditions for their youth through youth work practice.

25. E-Estonia, <https://e-estonia.com/>

26. Independent Reporting Mechanism (IRM): Estonia Progress Report 2016-2017, page 5, https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Estonia_Mid-Term-Report_2016-2018_EN_for-public-comment.pdf

27. “Estonia is building a new digital nation state for everybody,” Kaspar Korjus, managing director of the e-residency programme, told The World Weekly. <https://e-estonia.com/e-estonia-state-of-the-future/>



Smart youth work

“Smart youth work is not an activity or method itself, nor does it replace existing practices”²⁸

Estonia recognized the concept of smart youth work²⁹ in 2017. The objectives are: 1) smart youth work solutions aimed at youth; 2) smart youth work digital solution development needs related to youth workers' competencies and work methods; 3) developing the quality, functioning and efficacy of youth work and gaining better knowledge of youth.

Further, Association of Estonian Open Youth Work Centers has developed system to digitally keep track of participation and development of youth. It ensures that data is collected everywhere according to the same logic.³⁰ Also to predict different situations in nearly future and (re)design services for youth if is that needed.

Above all Estonia has developed a coherent and aligned (smart) youth work system that begins in early childhood and extends beyond the regular school day. Hobby education, youth centers, libraries and schools provide access to technology and tech programs as well. In short, looks like that Estonian strategy was to create access to technology first of all.

28. The concept of smart youth work, page 7, paragraph 1, <https://docplayer.net/63142525-The-concept-of-smart-youth-work.html>

29. <https://entk.ee/nak-veeb/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Nutika-NT-kontseptsioon-ENG-web.pdf>

30. <https://juhtimislauad.stat.ee/>

While youth workers and trainers in non-formal education are up-to-date and actively using smart tools in youth work, the lack of digital infrastructure is following the overall lack of infrastructure for youth work in Serbia. With organizations struggling to pay rents and youth clubs struggling to maintain minimum budgets for activities, devices (such as VR glasses, robots, 3d printers etc) are for most youth work programmes a very faraway dream.

The question is also raised among youth workers about the efficiency of digital tools in every context. While there are apps that are very useful for gamification and group interactivity, some youth workers feel that there is an overuse of digital tools in some contexts, which they fear may lead to alienation of young people. The main topic for further discussion would be where one draws the line between digital tools adding quality to the programme and too much of a digital tools just for the purpose of calling it smart.

Open Youth Centers

As of 1 January 2016, Estonia has 283,350 young people at the age of 7–26, which is 21.54% of the Estonian population.

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In the 2000s there was a boom in opening open youth centers all over Estonia (one open youth center in 1998, and 280 open youth centers in 2018). In recent years, the tendency of youth work is increasingly shifting from developing the infrastructure and services towards the pedagogical aims to support the formation of an active and conscious citizen.

An open youth center is a youth work organisation owned by local authorities or non-profit associations. A youth center has the widest range of services of youth work and is one of the common youth work providers. Youth centers may exist in various forms, but most of them are characterized by applying the open youth work method. According to a survey conducted in 2011, the estimated number of youth who participated in the activities of youth centers once a week and more was over 77,000. In the similar way like in Estonia from 2007 until 2014 was a boom in opening youth offices, not centers, all over Serbia (one open youth office in 2007, and more than 120 open youth offices in 2014). In contrast to Estonia most of youth office coordinators are not educated youth workers. Further, Serbia didn't use opportunity to transform unused spaces from the past in youth centers. To illustrate this point the association European Youth Capital Novi Sad is building the first you center in Serbia today.



Hobby Schools

Under the concept of non-formal education also lies hobby education. State and municipal support for education extends after school as well. Estonia has a whole system of hobby schools and youth work in which young people (age group 7–26), can participate. Whole system has 750 hobby schools³² and 79698 students.³³ Schools and students may receive additional funding from their municipality for after school activities.³⁴ In the similar way privately persons or NGO's can accredit educational program and/or organization at Ministry of education in Serbia.

Purpose of hobby education, according to the Standard for Hobby Education is to provide opportunities for the comprehensive development of personality and to support young people in their development into members of society with good coping skills. Those schools are divided into:

- 1) Music and art schools;
- 2) sports schools;
- 3) centers of technology, natural science, creative activity and special interest.

The owners of a hobby school can be local governments or NGOs. The curricula of hobby schools are registered in the Estonian Education Information System (EHIS). Educators, often youth workers, students or others with expertise in a particular subject, work with groups of young people on a weekly basis.

It is expected and also supported by the state that formal education and hobby education are integrated, e.g some lessons taught by specialists in hobby schools or experience and knowledge gained in hobby school recognized in formal education.

32. <http://213.184.44.253/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=NH09>

33. <http://213.184.44.253/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=NH09>

34. <https://www.hm.ee/en/activities/youth/financing-youth-work>

Formal education

Youth work in Estonia is an independent sector (different from social work or education).

With a population of 1.3 million, it is one of the least populous members of the European Union, Like other countries with small population Estonia doesn't have the luxury to lose any person. Estonians have learned how to harvest talents all around the country. Four unicorns can prove that. Education is a very important topic in Estonia and youth work is recognized as an important part of the educational system as well. Therefore it is not surprising that Estonia has very strong formal educational system regarding to youth work.

Youth worker training was initiated in 1992, and by 2013, youth workers were being trained in three institutions of higher education: Tallinn University Pedagogical Seminar (since 1992), University of Tartu Viljandi Culture Academy (since 1995), and University of Tartu Narva College (since 2004).³⁵ Tallinn University also has master on youth work management. Issues of youth work and youth policy can thus be researched. That is showing how Estonia values youth work.

The aim of the youth work studies in Tallinn University is to develop basic knowledge ensuring the skills to manage, direct, organize and analyze youth work. To support the acquisition of competences in the field of youth work.³⁶ The students acquire the diploma of Professional Higher Education. The Structure of the study programme has for example placement, foundations, environments and methods, organizations of youth work. Youth Work studies graduate get together with the diploma youth workers occupational, level 6. This gives them the acquisitions to work in the field.³⁷

35. https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47262055/H4_Estonia.pdf/35c039ec-6c00-4c7e-8106-19ce70919e06

36. https://ois2.tlu.ee/tluois/uus_ois2.tud_leht

37. <https://www.tlu.ee/hti/noorsootoo>



One of the most important parts in Youth work studies at Tartu University Narva College is self-assessment, entrepreneurship and using digital technologies. During the studies students get an in-depth understanding of the youth work.³⁸

The modules of the curriculum include: Youth in society, basics of youth work, youth in digital society, self-initiative and enterprising. The bachelor level programme offers with the diploma also youth workers occupation level 6.³⁹

In University of Tartu Viljandi Culture Academy professional higher Education (equal to Bachelor's studies) in Community Education and Hobby Activity is offered. Upon the completion of the curriculum the students know the content and terminology of the field of culture, education and youth.⁴⁰ The curriculum consists for example of cultural education, pedagogy, leisure management, administrative work module, And four specialization modules in two fields: creativity education - creative activities and applied drama, activity education - adventure education and games and simulation. The curriculum is the process of acquiring the rights to give the diploma professional occupation, level 6.

As we emphasized before education of youth workers in Serbia lays in hands of civic organizations. Several attempts of introducing formal education in youth work have been made in the past, but none were sustainable enough. Bachelor studies Communicologist - community youth work was developed in cooperation of Centre for Youth Work (NAPOR member organization), Alfa University and Jonkoping University from Sweden. Only one generation enrolled in 2007 and finished their studies. Master studies in Community youth work were developed through TEMPUS project on University of Novi Sad and first generation enrolled in 2012/2013 school year. At the moment, there is no call for the next generation of students for this course, which is probably because of little interest for it in previous years. Currently there is only one electoral subject - Introduction to community youth work on master studies in pedagogy.⁴¹

38. <https://www.narva.ut.ee/et/1152184>

39. [https://www.is.ut.ee/pls/ois/!tere.tulemast?](https://www.is.ut.ee/pls/ois/!tere.tulemast?leht=OK.BL.PU&id_oppekava=601&id_a_oppekava=5465&kordi_pealehel=1&systeemi_seaded=12,1,12,1,&viida%20kaudu=1&sessioon=0)

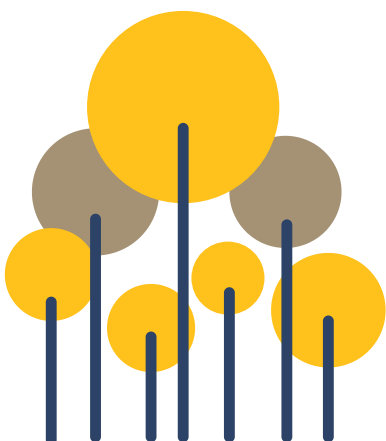
[leht=OK.BL.PU&id_oppekava=601&id_a_oppekava=5465&kordi_pealehel=1&systeemi_seaded=12,1,12,1,&viida%20kaudu=1&sessioon=0](https://www.kultuur.ut.ee/en/departments/culture/programmes/leisure-time-teacher)

40. <https://www.kultuur.ut.ee/en/departments/culture/programmes/leisure-time-teacher>

41. http://www.napor.net/sajt/images/Dokumenta/youth_work_pathways-eng.pdf

GOOD PRACTICE IN THE YOUTH FIELD IN SERBIA

The purpose of this part is to briefly present some good youth work practices in Serbia about: mechanisms for professionalization of youth work, ethical and professional principles of the work of youth workers and quality assurance of youth work in Serbia. As we pass through text below we shall see how youth work ecosystem in Serbia deal with education and quality standardization of youth work and which good solutions grew up.



Professionalisation of youth work

With the lack of formal education for youth workers in Serbia, NAPOR has developed vocational standards for 3 occupational levels in youth work: youth leader, youth worker and specialist in youth work.

Besides that NAPOR has developed curricula for the education of youth leaders and youth workers, based on non-formal education with strong practical component. There is still no curricula for the third level, as the document requires University degree for Specialist in youth work.

Curricula for both levels consist of 5 (youth leaders) or 4 (youth workers) 'theoretical' modules, where participants are introduced to basic concepts of youth work and are developing competences important for their future vocation. Modules are organized in combination of online learning and direct work with group of participants, with specific tasks after each of the modules (in the form of essays, small projects, activity plans, etc.). In addition to the modules, participants have mandatory practical work with young people in their organizations, which includes creation of program with and for youth, its implementation through 25 to 30 meetings with the group, monitoring, evaluation and reporting. The whole practical placement is supervised by experienced youth worker, who is in charge of mentoring participants' learning throughout the whole education program.

The modules are implemented by youth workers from previously licenced NAPOR member organisations, in order to ensure the quality of the educational program and also support member organisations in their professional growth. Throughout the whole learning journey (modules, essays and tasks, practical work) the person going through the program is mentored by experienced youth workers / mentors who give constant feedback and who support learning process.

There is also a mechanism for validation of previously gained competences in youth work for youth leaders and youth workers, which enables people who already have extensive experience in youth work to gain certificate without following the whole education process.⁴²

However, even though from 2019 the vocation is officially recognized by the state (In 2019, youth worker is officially classified in the national qualifications framework in Serbia. Youth leader and specialist in youth work are not classified in the registry) there is no official openings for youth workers in state institutions and youth workers still mostly work in civil society organizations.

42. http://www.napor.net/sajt/images/Dokumenta/youth_work_pathways-eng.pdf



Ethics in youth work

The Ethics Committee is an independent body within NAPOR that ensures the Code of Ethics⁴³ in Youth Work is respected and promoted. **The Code of Ethics** is a document that defines the ethical and professional principles of the work of youth workers in Serbia. Each member organization of NAPOR and each youth worker (and leader) certified by NAPOR commits to respecting them.

The Ethics Committee has the mandate to respond adequately in the event of a breach of the Code of Ethics, through giving recommendations to member organizations as well as giving opinions towards non-NAPOR-member organizations. The Ethics Committee is continuously working on promotion of ethics in youth work, among youth workers, young people and their parents and decision makers, ensuring the ethics of youth work practices in Serbia. The Ethics Committee has 5 members, who are selected at NAPOR general assembly for the mandate of 2 years. The role of Ethics Committee is more closely defined in the document “Ethics from poster to practice”,⁴⁴ a handbook for understanding and implementing the Code of Ethics in Youth Work in practice.

There is no such body in Estonian practice in charge of promoting and regulating respect of ethical principles in youth work practice, and one of the recommendations of participants is to furtherly explore the possibilities to adapt the NAPOR practice.

43. <http://www.napor.net/sajt/images/Dokumenta/Etiki-kodeks-u-omladinskom-radu.pdf>

44. http://www.napor.net/sajt/images/Dokumenta/prirucnik_o_etici_u_omladinskom_radu.pdf



Quality of youth work programs

In Serbia, standardization of quality in youth work belongs again to civic organizations. Since 2010, when NAPOR has developed and adopted a document: "Quality assurance of youth work programs" process of accreditation in youth work is implemented. This document has set of 8 standards that cover different aspects of youth work programs, which each youth work programme, or in other words each civic organizations, should fulfill.

The Mechanism of accreditation is mandatory for member organizations. It includes self-assessment and assessment of the team of accreditors - persons with experience in youth work and advanced supervision skills.

Finally organizations who pass the process gaining the certificate of Accredited organization for implementation and promotion of quality standards in youth work, by which NAPOR guarantees their openness and readiness to constantly work on promotion of their youth work programs.⁴⁵ But the most important part of the process is that civic organizations are gaining a know-how to improve their youth work practice.

Beside that another benefit is coming from the Ministry of Youth and Sports by valuation of NAPOR accreditation during evaluation of projects in annual open calls for associations.

So far more than 50 organizations got involved in accreditation process, some of them already working continuously for more than 9 years on improvement of their youth work program through the process of re-accreditation.

45. NAPOR website, <http://www.napor.net/sajt/index.php/sr-yu/medjunarodni-projekti/about-napor>

CONCLUSIONS

The authors have presented the main topics and practices from both Serbian and Estonian youth work realities, presented in the framework of the project. The overall idea of this document is not to provide answers, but rather to inform/present the conclusions and create space for further discussion in the field.

Thus we invite you to actively contribute to its continuation, by raising questions on important issues and using the above read for further research, talks and advocacy. Then, hopefully, this will not only be just another implemented project and the policy paper produced, but a baseline for further more and more successful youth work stories.





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Serbia and Estonia learning from (and with) each other

Authors:
ANA PECARSKI
DENIZ HOTI



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