

Kertu Vahtra: "Young people give me strength"

Introduce yourself and your organisation (incl. the structure in which you operate in the youth field).

I am a woman who loves to be on the move and fight when I see that someone has been wronged. My work slightly differs from the usual concept of youth work. I work in a small company in Tartu that seasonally employs young people with special educational needs or young people who have gotten into trouble. My work involves providing them support and giving, showing, and introducing them opportunities.

What makes your job exciting?

The young people with whom I work come from very different backgrounds and have different problems, and keeping track their journey is what makes this work interesting. It is also often very difficult to get close to them.

What are your dreams as a youth worker?

I dream about youth workers being recognised as educational workers by the society, policymakers, and at a national level.

Why did you choose youth work?

It is something that I have been involved with my entire life. I am now also able to apply my youth work skills and knowledge outside my regular job. Young people give me strength, which is something that adults are unable to do, and the flow of their ambitious ideas is something that cannot be described.

What is your most memorable experience as a youth worker?

The first time a young person contacted me with a problem that they were afraid to discuss with other adults. It was the emotion that I felt as I helped them and monitored their progress.

How has youth work / being a youth worker influenced you? (What have you learned from it?)

Mostly, noticing youth work related instances in situations that you usually would not think about. I have also learned that awareness raising, not ignoring problems, and willingness to respond are the most important things.