

A European platform in support of youth work at the municipal level: concept 2021–2027



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The Project

There is a high demand for structured and continuous **European co-operation to develop and strengthen youth work**. The **European Youth Work Agenda** is the actual framework for answering that demand. The **3rd European Youth Work Convention** has brought together the European youth work community of practice and identified actions, measures, and future steps to support the implementation of the Agenda through the **Bonn process**.

In most European countries, the responsibility for **youth work lies to a large extent with the municipal level**, as this political and administrative structure is the closest to young people. Municipalities help to improve the living conditions of young people in a variety of ways and circumstances. They do so by supporting local youth work practices and structures or they carry out youth work themselves.

Europe Goes Local aims to strengthen the youth work community of practice at the local level, in line with the European Youth Work Agenda and from the perspective of municipalities and of local youth work actors. It is a European cooperation platform for quality development in local youth work through advocacy, exchange of knowledge, peer-learning, and networking.

Europe Goes Local attempts to **build bridges between the local and European levels, including municipalities in rural areas, by strengthening the dialogue between their stakeholders**. European programmes and cooperation will become more accessible to local youth work providers and

make the European dimension an integral part of local youth work provision. Europe Goes Local offers **tools and opportunities** for local stakeholders to collaborate, develop common projects and creates fora for **introducing European best practices** with the purpose of **peer-learning**.

The project is financed by the contributions of participating National Agencies, in the frame of **Erasmus+** (Training and Cooperation Activities) and/or the **European Solidarity Corps** (Networking Activities).

The project is running for the period of 2021 – 2027. A mid-term evaluation will be implemented in 2024, leading eventually to an adaptation of its goals.

Aims and Objectives

Based on discussions in the network of National Agencies, the European Steering Group, and the Advisory Board, the following aims and objectives have been defined:

- 1. Support the development of the provision, recognition, practice and quality of youth work, carried out by the local youth work communities of practice, as part of municipal youth policy, guided by the European Charter on Local Youth Work (defined as 'the Charter' in the text below**
 - 1.1. Support the creation, development and functioning of local youth work communities of practice, keeping in view the need for cross-sectoral cooperation.
 - 1.2. Raise awareness on the value of municipal level youth work and improve its recognition through enhanced communication on good practices of local youth work at the European and national levels.
 - 1.3. Contribute to the creation of a basic youth work offer for young people all over Europe, with the guidance of the Charter.
 - 1.4. Develop and implement a systematic training offer for local youth workers and policy makers, taking into account all aspects of the Charter.
 - 1.5. Offer ad hoc trainings on specific aspects of the Charter, in support of local youth workers, organisations and/or policy makers.
 - 1.6. Provide tools and support knowledge-building for quality development of youth work and create links amongst stakeholders active in local youth work provision to enhance their collaboration.
 - 1.7. Contribute to European debates and critical self-reflection within the youth work community of practice with concerted advocacy for a more secure infrastructure for youth work that can enable effective practice on the ground.
- 2. Making the European dimension an integral part of youth work at the municipal level.**
 - 2.1. Develop and provide tailored approach, support, information and counselling for municipalities to successfully engage in European co-operation and partnership, using the opportunities of Erasmus + and/or the European Solidarity Corps.
 - 2.2. Develop and implement a structured and targeted offer of European study visits on local youth work for municipalities.
 - 2.3. Create opportunities for European capacity building, networking, peer-learning and mutual exchange amongst stakeholders, delivering competence and expertise on youth work at the municipal level.
 - 2.4. Develop and offer targeted approaches of NAs in the programme(s) implementation for local youth work and their community of practice

3. Contribute to the development of youth work within the European Youth Work Agenda and the Bonn Process

- 3.1. Take an active role in the implementation of the European Youth Work Agenda and the strategies on youth work of both the European Union and the Council of Europe, involving local youth work actors in the European and national processes and discourses.
- 3.2. Link local and European level initiatives of youth work within the Bonn process.
- 3.3. Contribute to monitoring the development of youth work and the implementation of the Bonn process.
- 3.4. Create synergies and/or complementarity with other European networks, projects actors, dealing with youth work on local level, both in EU and in EU-neighbouring regions.

Structures

Based on the development of the 2016-2020 period and considering the needs and expectations of stakeholders, Europe Goes Local aims to be a European **platform supporting quality development in local youth work** in the 2021-2027 programme cycle. A platform, which creates **dialogue and cooperation, providing concrete activities, learning, and networking opportunities, tools, and sources of knowledge** in the programme countries and neighbouring partner countries of the Erasmus+ Youth in Action and the European Solidarity Corps programmes. A platform that supports the building of shared visions on the aims, practices and policies needed for local youth work and advocates them.



Creating the European platform

The objective of the Europe Goes Local platform is to bring together partners who are involved in advocating, supporting, developing, and implementing local youth work, both governmental and non-governmental nature. The platform offers space for National Agencies of the E+:Youth and ESC programmes, **European and national networks and umbrella organizations, the SALTO Resource Centres, other large-scale initiatives and strategic cooperation projects.**

All partners join the platform voluntarily, by subscribing to the vision and mission of Europe Goes Local and by contributing actively to its activities in the field of sharing knowledge, creating tools, networking, advocacy, and dissemination of the project outcomes. The members of the platform commit to recognize the Charter and the Changemakers Kit as tools for quality development on local youth work.

The network of **National Agencies** of the Erasmus+ and ESC programmes is the initiator of the platform and participating NA's are the backbone for implementing activities both at the European and national level. **National and local stakeholders** are, in partnership with National Agencies, invited to collaborate in the **National Working Groups** at the national level and build their action plans, which are tailored to the needs of those who have a key role in municipal level youth work.

Members are expected to join the platform for a long term, at least until 2024, when a mid-term evaluation of the project and revision of its aims will be carried out.

Governance of the platform

The platform is governed by the **Steering Group**. The Steering Group defines the general concept and main aims of the platform as well as the common activities carried out at the European level.

To aim for a fair and transparent representation of key stakeholders, the composition of the Steering Group is open to all partners who are ready to take this responsibility for a period of minimum 2 years. A balanced participation of representatives of National Agencies and of other stakeholders is to be guaranteed. The Steering Group meets at least twice a year or more if the tasks indicate.

The National Agencies automatically become members of the **Advisory Board** of the project. The Advisory Board is a forum to plan smaller scale European level activities as part of the project and a place to exchange about national level activities. The Advisory Board makes recommendations regarding the overall concept of the project to feed into the decision-making process that is driven by the Steering Group. The Advisory Board meets at least twice a year.

All partners are invited for the **yearly conference** of the platform to engage in a professional exchange within the platform on the development of local youth work.

Working together

The **European coordination** implements the activities that are defined as common project activities and is responsible for implementing the external communication at the European level.

National Agencies and the National Working Groups are responsible for national level and smaller scale European level activities, as well as communication about the project and cooperation between stakeholders on national and local level.

The platform also offers the possibility of working on and going deeper into certain topics in thematic working groups. Any platform member can initiate a proposal for a **thematic working group**.

Internal communication is a key to success in the platform concept. The platform provides a communication channel where all actors can interact with each other. The channel will provide dedicated and separate spaces for internal communication amongst the members of the different groups, but it will also enable members to communicate freely with each other.