

## 2 Introduction

“Youth activities and youth work play a central role in fostering knowledge and commitment to civil society”. This idea is often reflected and has meanwhile gained full recognition within European institutions and policy. In the context of the life-long learning strategy and the Lisbon Agenda to make Europe the most dynamically competitive, sustainable knowledge-based economy in the world, the Council of Europe and European Commission published a joint text on *Pathways towards Validation and Recognition of non-formal and informal learning in the youth field*, which highlights the value of youth non-formal learning towards the development of learning in the knowledge society and civil society renewal. In this context youth non-formal learning is centrally positioned within the Third Sector.

Since 2003 the research strand of the *Partnership on Youth between the European Commission and the Council of Europe* (<http://www.youth-partnership.net>) was given among others the objective to work towards increasing the visibility and recognition of youth work and to further elaborate the significance of youth work within the Third Sector. Today the Recognition, quality and visibility of youth work and training

Hence in April 2004 a seminar with the title ‘The Youth Sector and Non-formal Education/Learning: working to make lifelong learning a reality and contributing to the Third Sector’ was organised and its results published<sup>1</sup>. The seminar reiterated the need for a mapping of the youth sector to gain a better understanding of the range and occupational aspects of youth work. Further evidence of the associated socio-economic value was required to satisfactorily show the youth sector’s contribution to the 3rd sector as a whole.

Following these recommendations, a literature review was commissioned in 2005 to establish the feasibility for carrying out the present study “The Socio-economic Scope of Youth Work in Europe”.

The study hopes to provide a quantitative overview and analysis of

- the sectors of specific and related youth activities;
- the money and time invested in them;
- the number of people employed and
- the young people participating in these activities.

It thus hopes to enhance knowledge and understanding of investment in youth activities.

---

<sup>1</sup> Chisholm, Lynne, Bryony Hoskins (2005): *Trading up - Potential and performance in non-formal learning*, Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg

The study was carried out by institutions or experts in ten European countries:

Austria:	Austrian Institute for Youth Research, Vienna
Estonia:	Tartu University, Department of Sociology, Tartu
Germany:	Institute for Social Work and Social Education, Frankfurt/Main
Greece:	Dora Giannaki, Athens
Ireland:	University College Cork, Department of Applied Social Studies, Cork
Italy:	Centre for Training and Research in Public Health, Caltanissetta
Netherlands:	VU University Amsterdam, Department of Sociology, Amsterdam
Norway:	NOVA - Norwegian Social Research, Oslo
Romania:	National Research Institute on Labour and Social Protection, Bucharest
Spain:	University of Valladolid, Department of Sociology and Social Work, Segovia

Those ten European Countries were selected to cover the different regimes of youth work defined in the IARD Study: Norway as an example for the universalistic/parternalistic system, Ireland as an example for the liberal/community-based system, Austria, Germany and the Netherlands as examples for the conservative/corporatist system and Greece, Italy and Spain as examples for the mediterranean/sub-institutionalised system. Romania represents a new member of the European Union and was chosen as an example for a southeastern country in transition. Estonia was chosen as an example for the Baltic States and as a country that is - although under positive conditions of social cohesion - still facing transition and change.

The *Institut für Sozialarbeit und Sozialpädagogik* (Institute for Social Work and Social Education) (ISS-Frankfurt/M. e.V.) was the consortium leader and responsible for the management of the project. The ISS-Frankfurt/M. e.V. is a legally independent, non-profit-making association funded in 1974. The ISS-Frankfurt/M. e.V. offers a nation-wide service for public and independent bodies which sponsor social work. This includes consultation projects regarding the implementation of social policy programmes as well as guidance for institutions and public bodies regarding the improvement of methods of social work. Central issues are e.g. Family and Youth Policy, Policy for Vulnerable Groups, Civic Citizenship issues as well as all targets of Integration Policy. Furthermore, the ISS-Frankfurt/M. e.V. does research, gives advice to social institutions in organisational development processes and provides vocational training in social work.

This report focuses on the structures of youth work in these European countries as documented and reported by national reports from the participating institutions and experts.

The first part of the report presents central comparative results regarding

- the definitions of youth work;
- the main fields of action of youth work and
- the pathways to qualification of youth workers.

On the one hand this provides a structured comparison of the main categories influencing the characteristics of youth work in every country. Particularly regarding the main field of action, it also offers a first mutual framework for commitment on the central categories of youth work in an European context. Short qualitative descriptions of the status of youth work in each country provide the opportunity to deepen the understanding of the nature of youth work in each national context.

The second part of the report presents and analyses the available data about youth work at each national level. It provides an overview of the reporting structures and routines in each country and identifies best practices in reporting. The data sources are presented; the scope of the available data is discussed as well as the reasons for the lack of statistic material.

As the categories of youth work are not comparable, the data available for each country is presented in separate tables. This gives an overview of the statistically reliable part of youth work and allows gaps to be identified.

The third part of the report processes the data about youth work collected by each institution at local level and discusses the particularities of each country. This section examines the main statements made about the nature and scope of youth work and contrasts them to the findings at national level.

Part four of this report contains the central findings and discussions lines of the study regarding

- the significance of the data about youth work
- the statistically educible nature and scope of youth work
- the necessary structures and categories of reporting and
- the favourable conditions and constraints of documentation.

Finally the last part of the report summarises some recommendations regarding possible further action at European level. These recommendations are the result of the fruitful discussions of experts at the concluding conference held on 18 June 2007 in Strasbourg.