

## 7 Qualification of Youth Workers

The overview of pathways to qualification presented here was taken from the IARD Study on the State of Young People and Youth Policy in Europe; it has been revised and actualised by the partners.

In general we can state that all countries have a split system of education and training for youth workers that includes training for voluntary or employed youth workers, and professional studies at professional schools and universities. But youth work is – with the exception of Ireland – not an independent course of studies in any of the countries surveyed but rather included in careers like social pedagogy, social sciences, educational sciences, social work or social administration. In Ireland there is a Bachelor of Social Science in “Youth and Community Work”. The B.Soc.Sc. Youth and Community Work offers a degree and professional education to activists who are interested in the youth and community work area. In order to facilitate the ongoing community involvement of students, the course is designed on a flexible basis. Students attend college and do placements. The course is aimed at all youth and community activists but particularly at people from disadvantaged communities. Applications from minority groups are especially welcomed.

As already stated by the IARD study, higher levels of training seem to be related to a lesser degree of specialisation and are integrated in a broad professional context of social pedagogy, educational sciences or social sciences<sup>27</sup>. The training for youth workers on a professional education level tends to be more specialised and oriented towards a practical education. In some countries there were developments towards the implementation of the European Credit Transfer System.

In all countries there is a short training system for voluntary workers or for those youth workers who start working as professionals in local authorities, as is the case in Italy. Only in very few cases are these trainings standardised or their certificates officially recognised.

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27 IARD Study on the State of Young People and Youth Policy in Europe, January 2001, part IV, page 134

**Table 8: Qualification of Youth Workers<sup>28</sup>**

	Term <sup>29</sup>	Education and Training Pathways (length, practice/theory and type of qualification)		
		Voluntary Level	Professional Schools	Higher Education
Austria	SW	Further training for volunteers provided by youth organisations and associations and by youth departments of the state governments. Only a few lead to officially recognised certificates	Professional Schools: 5-year full-time course in 'social pedagogy', 10% practice  Colleges for Social Pedagogy: 2 years (full-time), 3 years part-time, mainly theory with practical elements  Further training courses: certificates not recognised by public bodies, 2 years	Academy for social work: Diploma in Social Work, 4 years,  University: Diploma in Educational Sciences  Both are courses with a mainly theoretical focus
Estonia	YW SP SW	Youth organisations offer their volunteers different training possibilities at professional level, but most of them are very chaotic and not organised regularly	Colleges for Social Pedagogy ( 3-year degree for youth workers & social pedagogues, 4-years degree for social workers) 40 - 50% practice  Training courses	University degrees in social sciences (sociology, social policy, social work, etc.) 3+2 at BA and MA level.
Germany	SP SW YW	Youth organisations and associations offer a huge variety of further training for volunteers. Only a few lead to officially acknowledged certificates	1) Professional training for social assistants: 2-year school-based training  2) Professional education and training for social educators: 3 to 4 years (1 year of practice)  3) Professional Academy for the Social Sector: 3-year degree (theory and practice alternating)	1) University diploma in educational sciences with a specialisation in social pedagogy: 4 years plus 6 months of placement  2) Polytechnic diploma in social work/social pedagogy: 3 years plus 1 year of practice  3) Bachelor/Master of Social Work: 2 years/3 years plus practice. Admission to a master's programme requires a professional certificate. ECTS accreditation
Greece	SW CA SP	Voluntary non-governmental organisations and associations may offer training courses for volunteers in the youth sector but without any overall coordination in terms of administration, theory or approach.  None of these training courses leads to an officially recognised qualification.	1) Public and private vocational training institutes (IEK) offer programmes on ecclesiastical and cultural training, early childhood social care/pedagogy, special education, organisation and management of children and youth camps, etc. Trainees who complete their studies obtain a Vocational Training Diploma (post secondary level +3).  2) Private vocational training centres (KEK) provide vocational training courses for employment in the areas of culture, sports and leisure.  3) Centres for adult education (KEE) offer a variety of training courses on: - Counselling and special education (25-50 hours). Trainees receive a Further Education Certificate. - Leisure time management (250 hours-1 year study). Access requires a high school degree. Trainees receive a Lifelong Learning Certificate.  4) The General Secretariat for Youth provides special training courses to the employees of youth information centres, twice a year (each training session has a duration of two days).	1) University degree in social administration, major in social work: 4 years of studies including 2 years of practice.  2) University degrees in social sciences (sociology, psychology, social policy, social anthropology, etc.), in educational sciences and pedagogy (primary education, early childhood education, special education, social pedagogy, etc.), not youth work specific: 4-year studies, plus, in some cases, some kind of practice depending on the degree.  3) Higher Technological Educational Institute degree in social work: practice-oriented 4-year degree preparing for youth and social services in the following areas: social welfare, special education, physical-psychological and mental health, social security, counselling and vocational guidance, delinquency prevention, community development, social services within the framework of the Hellenic Armed Forces and the Ministry of Public Order, etc.

<sup>28</sup> This table is based on the IARD Study on the State of Young People and Youth Policy in Europe, January 2001; part IV 116-123

<sup>29</sup> YW = Youth Worker (including Youth Instructors, Leisure Time Leaders); CA = Cultural Animator; SP = Social Pedagogue, Social Educator; SW = Social Worker (including Social Cultural Workers); YP = Youth Policy Professional

Ireland	YW SW	Voluntary associations provide non-standardised training for volunteers (traditionally strong influence of Church declining)		<p>1) Master of Social Science / Higher Diploma in Youth and Community Work: 2-year post-graduate course</p> <p>2) Master of Social Work: 2-year full-time course with practical placements</p> <p>3) Bachelor of Social Science in Youth and Community Work: 3-year course with practical part, in some cases access without post-compulsory qualifications</p>
Italy	CA SE YP	The situation is influenced by a general lack of national youth policy and the late implementation of local youth policies with considerable local and regional differences		
		Voluntary organisations and cooperatives offer a broad range of short and longer training courses. In some cases, these can be considered as further training for those starting to work as professionals in local youth policies without having appropriate qualifications.	University Diploma in Educational Sciences with specialisation in social pedagogy: 3 years for the first level degree and two years of specialisation plus placement	
Netherlands	YW SW	Voluntary youth associations may offer training for volunteers without stringent coordination.	Social cultural worker, social pedagogical worker, social service worker, welfare worker: 2 to 4-year degrees organised in four levels (modules) provided at Regional Education Centres. 60% practice training	Higher Vocational Education (UPE) in cultural and social education (CMV): 4-year degree equivalent to polytechnic level; practice experience is integrated (until 1990 special 'youth work' programme in UPE)
Norway	SW SP YW CA	Most voluntary organisations offer a wide range of courses for volunteers. Few of them lead to official acknowledged certificates. In many cases, volunteers have to take courses arranged by the different organisations to be considered suitable for doing youth work.	Child and youth work: 2 years of education in public secondary school plus 2 years of practice. Employment in kindergartens, youth clubs	<p>Bachelor in child welfare or social work: 3-year course at University Colleges, one semester practice placement included. Employment in child welfare services, schools, social services</p> <p>Master in child welfare or social work: Bachelor plus 2 years of further education at University Colleges. Employment in child welfare services, schools, social services, research and development</p>
Romania	LTL CA YP	Some youth associations/organisations offer training sessions and short courses for their volunteers. Volunteer organisations offer their volunteers either free or paid courses on different topics, depending on the activity.  Also, state institutions cooperate with youth NGOs to offer courses and training for young people on a range of issues. Certificates are offered at the end of these courses (trainings for trainers).		<p>There is no formal programme of qualification for youth workers.</p> <p>Youth workers get their qualifications by working in organisations, associations, by attending international seminars, workshops, courses, and thus achieving experience in the field of youth work.</p>
Spain	SW SE CA YP	Voluntary youth associations offer training for volunteers which may be coordinated by regional adult education centres (with certificate). These courses do not require a university degree.  A graduate university degree on voluntary work and cooperation is available (it requires a university degree).	<p>Higher technician for social services / socio-cultural animators: 2-year course at regional professional schools with a balance between practice and theoretical instruction. It does not require a university degree.</p> <p>Graduate university degree to achieve the title of socio cultural animator (requires a university degree).</p>	Social work and social education: 3-year university degree leading to management positions in local youth services and to work with specially disadvantaged youth; 40% practice and 60% study .