THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE YOUTH WORK PORTFOLIO

www.coe.int/youth–portfolio

An online tool for quality development of youth work in Europe based on self-assessment of youth workers' competences

Youth – Jeunesse

COUNCIL OF EUROPE

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The Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio

■■■ The Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio is an online tool that helps youth workers, youth leaders and youth organisations across Europe to understand their youth work competence and to develop it more effectively. Youth workers and youth leaders can use this tool in their practice to identify, assess and record their competences, and to set further learning and development goals. The tool can also be used by trainers, youth work managers and youth policy experts, and generally by all those interested in the topic of quality development and the recognition of youth work.

■■■ The Portfolio is based on the approaches of the Council of Europe in the area of youth work and youth policy. It supports youth workers and youth leaders in reflecting on and improving their youth work practice, and in promoting democratic citizenship and human rights education and values with young people.

■■■ By using this tool, you can contribute to making youth work more widely known and better understood. You also gain more self-confidence in the work you do and improve the quality of your youth work. Finally, you become part of a wider community of practice and help develop youth work further!

■■■ The Portfolio is an important part of the mission of the youth sector of the Council of Europe in promoting the recognition of youth work and non-formal education as key dimensions of youth policy, and as specific ways of supporting young people in their path to autonomy and participation in all spheres of society. Other measures for the recognition of youth work include the preparation of a Charter of Youth Work and the development of quality criteria for youth work.

What is youth work?

■■■ Youth work is commonly understood as a support for the personal development, social integration and active citizenship of young people. Youth work is an umbrella term for all kinds of activities with, for and by young people of a social, cultural, educational or political nature. It belongs to the domain of "out-of-school" education, most commonly referred to as either non-formal or informal learning. The main objective of youth work is to create opportunities for young people to shape their own futures. Youth work often has a strong educational purpose or dimension and non-formal education is at the core of this educational dimension. Youth work is also about influencing society, politics and power relations, especially if those put young people at a disadvantage, marginalise them or exclude them.

■■■ The practices of youth work across Europe are very diverse, as is the status of youth workers. Youth work can be organised by a variety of institutions and organisations, individually and in teams. Each country in Europe has its own history and traditions of youth work, ranging from long-established professional youth work
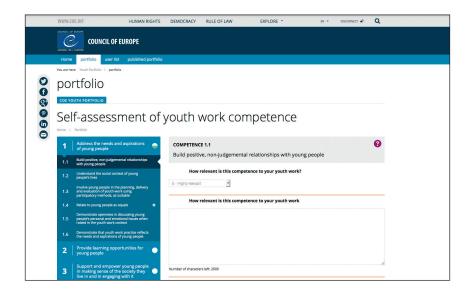
Using the Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio

■■■ The portfolio includes a self-assessment tool and a learning plan.

Self-assessment of youth work competence

▶ Evaluate your competences using a form to rate your competences.
▶ Describe your competences and bring in evidence and examples.
▶ Ask your colleagues or young people to provide feedback on your competences.

Set up your learning plan in order to further develop your competences.

▶ Identify what more you need to learn
▶ Set up a timeline for your learning and the ways in which you want to learn.
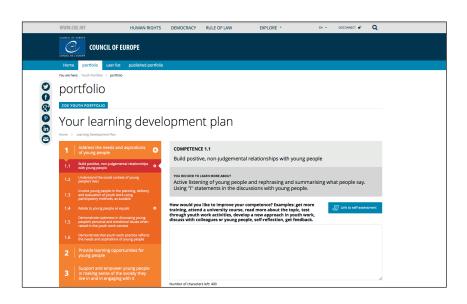
provisions to relying mostly on voluntary youth work structures and youth organisations. For the purpose of the Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio, youth workers are all those involved in an active role in carrying out youth work, as qualified staff or volunteer youth leaders in organisations, as individuals or teams. The Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio is for any person or organisation doing youth work, whatever their status – voluntary or professional – and in whichever constellation – individual, team or organisational partnership. It has been developed to consider the wide variety of youth work realities in Europe.

▬▬ Over time, you can go back to your self-assessment and learning plan, check your progress and assess your competences again.

▬▬ You can also:

▶ publish your self-assessment and learning plan and read those of others

▶ print your self-assessment and learning plan and create an "offline" Portfolio where you can add other evidence for your path as a youth worker or youth leader (diplomas, testimonies, examples of products you have developed for your youth work, etc.).

▬▬ You can use the online tool as an individual, or as a team or organisation!

The Portfolio and the Council of Europe's youth policy

▬ The Portfolio exemplifies the commitment of the Council of Europe's member states to promote the recognition of youth work based on the principles of non-formal education, which was reaffirmed in the Council of Europe's Recommendation Rec(2003)8 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the promotion and recognition of non-formal education/learning of young people and through activities and follow-up processes. The Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio was first published in 2007, on the initiative of the European Steering Committee on Youth.

▬ The new online version of the Portfolio was developed in close co-operation with the governmental and non-governmental partners of the Council of Europe, chiefly the members of the Advisory Council on Youth and the European Youth Forum. Many youth organisations and youth workers contributed to the development of the Portfolio in its current form. The portfolio has been tested in several countries and has been designed to enable users to make adaptations if necessary, for instance, by adding competences specific to their youth work practice.

The Council of Europe and young people

▬ For over 40 years, the Council of Europe and young people have been working together to build a better, safer and more united world. The Council of Europe is committed to building a Europe with and for all young people!

▬ The youth sector of the Council of Europe elaborates guidelines, programmes and legal instruments for the development of coherent and effective youth policies at local, national and European levels. It provides funding and educational support for international youth activities aiming at the promotion of youth citizenship, youth mobility and the value of human rights, democracy and cultural pluralism. It seeks to bring together and disseminate expertise and knowledge about the life situations, aspirations and ways of expression of young Europeans.

▬ Recognition of youth work and non-formal education is a key priority of the youth sector of the Council of Europe.

Competence framework for youth work

FUNCTIONS OF YOUTH WORKERS

COMPETENCES OF YOUTH WORKERS

1.
Address the needs and aspirations of young people

1.1. Build positive, non-judgemental relationships with young people
1.2. Understand the social context of young people's lives
1.3. Involve young people in the planning, delivery and evaluation of youth work using participatory methods, as suitable
1.4. Relate to young people as equals
1.5. Demonstrate openness in discussing young people's personal and emotional issues when raised in the youth work context
1.6. Demonstrate that their practice reflects the needs and aspirations of young people

2.
Provide learning opportunities for young people

2.1. Support young people in identifying their learning needs, wishes and styles, taking any special needs into consideration
2.2. Create safe, motivating and inclusive learning environments for individuals and groups
2.3. Use a range of educational methods, including those which develop creativity and foster motivation for learning
2.4. Provide young people with appropriate guidance and feedback
2.5. Inform young people about learning opportunities and support them in using them effectively

3.
Support and empower young people in making sense of the society they live in and in engaging with it

3.1. Assist young people in identifying and taking responsibility for the role they want to have in their community and society
3.2. Support young people in identifying goals, developing strategies and organising individual and collective action for social change
3.3. Support young people in developing their critical thinking and understanding about society and power, how social and political systems work, and how they can have an influence on them
3.4. Support the competence and confidence development of young people

FUNCTIONS OF YOUTH WORKERS	COMPETENCES OF YOUTH WORKERS
4. Support young people in actively and constructively addressing intercultural relations	4.1. Support young people in acquiring intercultural competences 4.2. Promote interaction between young people who come from diverse backgrounds at home and abroad so that they can learn about other countries, cultural contexts, political beliefs, religions, and so on 4.3. Work creatively on and with conflicts with a view to transforming them constructively 4.4. Actively include young people from a diverse range of backgrounds and identifications in youth work activities
5. Actively practice evaluation to improve the quality of the youth work conducted	5.1. Involve young people in planning and organising evaluation 5.2. Plan and apply a range of participatory methods of evaluation 5.3. Use the results of evaluation for the improvement of their practice 5.4. Stay up-to-date with the latest youth research on the situation and needs of young people
6. Support collective learning in teams	6.1. Actively evaluate teamwork with colleagues, and use the results to improve effectiveness 6.2. Seek and give feedback on teamwork 6.3. Share relevant information and practices in youth work with colleagues
7. Contribute to the development of their organisation and to making policies / programmes work better for young people	7.1. Actively involve young people in shaping their organisation's policies and programmes 7.2. Co-operate with others to shape youth policies
8. Develop, conduct and evaluate projects	8.1. Apply project management approaches 8.2. Seek and manage resources 8.3. Give visibility to projects, write reports and make presentations, for a variety of audiences 8.4. Use information and communication technology tools when necessary

Try out the Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio

■ Visit the Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio at:

www.coe.int/youth-portfolio

and try out the Portfolio tool.

■ On this website, you can also:

▶ find information about youth work essentials and youth work competences

▶ share and learn from practices of youth work from all over Europe

▶ get updates about the process of recognition of youth work in Europe.

■ Let us know your thoughts and ideas for improvements by writing an email to

youthportfolio@coe.int

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The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

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