



Youth Work: What Is It? Making a Definition

Youth Work is a diverse field of social and educational practices shaping a so-called 'third socialisation environment', next to family and school (CoE – EU: Youth Partnership).

In some countries 'youth work' is a relatively well-defined, distinct practice. In other countries (especially in southern Europe), the term is less well known and there is no identifiable overall concept of youth work.

Regarding the target group, in a number of countries youth work is restricted to working with young people (18-30 years).

In the November 2009 *Resolution on a renewed framework for European co-operation in the youth field*¹ youth work has been defined in the following way: Youth work is a broad term covering a large scope of activities of a social, cultural, educational or political nature both by, with and for young people. Increasingly, such activities also include sport and services for young people. Youth work belongs to the area of 'out-of-school' education, as well as in specific leisure time activities managed by professional or voluntary youth workers and youth leaders and is based on non-formal learning processes and on voluntary participation².

With a clear definition of what Youth Work is in mind, it is now possible to investigate the concept of **Good practice**.

¹ Council of the European Union, Council Resolution on a renewed framework for European Cooperation in the youth field, (2010-2018), 27 November 2009. Available online at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1390996863108&uri=CELEX:32009G1219%2801%29>.

² For more information, please, visit the CoE and UE website on Youth Partnership: <http://pjp.eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/youth-work1>.



Good Practices in the Youth Field

A practice shall be defined as *good* once it has proven to work well and to produce good results, which have been tested and validated. Therefore, such practice is recognized as a successful experience and it can be recommended as a model for others to adopt or apply.

Good practices deserve to be shared so that a greater number of people can draw inspiration from them or adopt and adapt them to their own territories.

Good practices should share some specific criteria:

Effective and Successful	It has strategic relevance and efficacy in achieving a specific objective. It has a positive impact on individuals and/or communities.
Technically Feasible	It is easy to learn and to implement.
Replicable and Adaptable	It should have the potential for replication. It should be adaptable to situations with similar objectives.
Sustainable (environmentally, economically and socially)	It should meet current needs without compromising the ability to address future ones.
Gender sensitive	Men and Women should be equally involved in the process.
Inherently participatory	Participatory approaches support a joint sense of ownership of decisions and actions.