



# Growing youth work throughout Europe

## The Bonn Process explained

### European Youth Work Agenda

#### Context

The European Youth Work Agenda (EYWA) is the newly established strategic framework for strengthening and developing youth work in Europe. It was called for in 2015 during the 2<sup>nd</sup> European Youth Work Convention (EYWC). Conventions are the central platform for stakeholders of the youth work community of practice to come together every five years. Since then, the European Union as well as the Council of Europe have affirmed this call by anchoring the Agenda in their current youth strategies and political documents, starting from the Council of Europe's Recommendation on Youth Work (2017) and its Youth Sector Strategy 2030 (2020) to the EU Council Resolution on the framework for establishing a European Youth Work Agenda (2020).

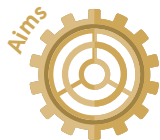
The implementation of the European Youth Work Agenda, the so-called Bonn Process, was launched at the 3<sup>rd</sup> European Youth Work Convention. The kick-off event took place in December 2020, when Germany held both the EU Council Presidency and

the Chairmanship of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

For the first time, a strategic framework for youth work development was both politically agreed as well as shaped and embraced by the youth work community of practice from around 50 countries all over Europe.

It was the participants of the Convention, representing the different stakeholders and contexts of the youth work community of practice from across Europe, who – through intense debate – generated the content for the main written outcome and central guiding document for making the Bonn Process happen: the final Declaration of the 3<sup>rd</sup> EYWC. While providing recommendations and inspiration, the Declaration invites the entire youth work community of practice to commit to and actively engage in the Bonn Process.

## Bonn Process



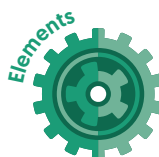
### Why a Bonn Process?

The Bonn Process is the common effort to put the European Youth Work Agenda into action and make it real. To realise strengthened and further developed youth work across Europe, the Bonn Process aims at greater alignment of the commitment of the different stakeholders of the youth work community of practice. Furthermore, it aims at enhanced connections and co-operation within and between all levels of the community of practice, a more strategic and co-ordinated approach and improved framework conditions for youth work. Above all, moving forward together towards stronger youth work is what the young people of Europe demand and deserve.

The Bonn Process follows several principles:

- Self-empowering – it is shaped by the youth work community of practice as the active and responsible stakeholder within their respective area of competence, mandate, role, and capacity
- Appreciative and needs-based – it builds on existing practice, and new features are based on commonly identified needs
- Co-ordinated – it is characterised by a co-ordinated approach of stakeholders at different levels and in different areas of youth work
- Europe wide – as a European Agenda and Process it includes EU and Council of Europe member States
- At all levels and cross-level – it includes engagement at all levels from the local to the European and between them
- Subsidiary – the responsibility and roles of the relevant levels of the member States in youth work as well as of organisations is respected and complemented by support and impulses at European level
- Locally anchored – as it emphasises the local dimension as the core level of youth work provision and crucial for the development of youth work

- Long-term and open – as it is designed as a long-term process (in line with the timeframes of the European strategies of the EU (until 2027) and CoE (2030)) and characterised by an open approach for future development



### What is happening in the Bonn Process?

The Bonn Process puts the Agenda into action by developing priorities and strategies, planning measures, and implementing activities at all levels in all areas of youth work. A co-ordinated approach for the different stakeholders is important to engage hand-in-hand and in a strategic way. The creation of a network for youth work development in Europe and of an open and multilingual European digital platform on youth work are recommended to support this. Monitoring, review and further development are important elements of the Bonn Process. Taking stock and planning ahead is foreseen to take place regularly with a Convention happening every five years.



### How?

The Bonn Process encompasses all levels, the European, national, regional and local level. The European process takes place under the umbrella of both European strategies in the field of youth. The instruments of the EU and the Council of Europe, namely the EU youth programmes Erasmus+ Youth and European Solidarity Corps as well as the European Youth Foundation, are major instruments to be used by beneficiaries for activities within the Bonn Process. Intensified co-operation between the European Commission and the Council of Europe can support making the European Youth Work Agenda happen.

At national level, member States are encouraged to identify or establish national working groups or processes and to link the working field of the respective country with the context of the Bonn Process. Depending on the mandates and stakeholder landscape in each country, national ministries responsible for youth, National Agencies, national youth councils, or other stakeholders can organise national processes. The implementation will strive for the most inclusive approach possible by enabling the joint shaping of the process by all relevant stakeholders and structures, ensuring youth participation and facilitating access to activities for all individuals and organisations willing to contribute.



## What is it all about?

The Bonn Process is about growing youth work throughout Europe. To get there, it puts the spotlight on eight priority areas and invites everyone active in youth work to engage in them:

### **Develop and expand the youth work offer**

To strengthen the provision of youth work in Europe, European policies and local policy-making play an important role in supporting the further development of a quality local youth work offer;

### **Quality development**

Quality development in youth work calls for better outreach and information about existing support structures and mechanisms. Clearer structures for co-operation and co-creation within and between all levels as well as strengthening and connecting existing networks at all levels are needed;

### **A common direction for the youth work community of practice**

For youth work to move in the same direction, providing spaces to explore, exchange, and build on examples of good practice across different styles of practice is required. A co-ordinated approach to learning, sharing, supporting, and building on youth work development and good practice at local, regional, national, and European level is needed;

### **Beyond the youth work community of practice**

It is important to communicate the value of youth work and engage effectively with different sectors. Strategic and operational approaches to cross-sectoral and horizontal co-operation on youth (and youth work) at all levels are needed;

### **Promotion and recognition**

More strategic and co-ordinated efforts are needed to make youth work better understood, visible and credible as a distinct work arena. Developing a common language, a set of terms supporting a widely shared general definition while leaving enough space to adjust and connect to local contexts and realities, will help create a common narrative;

### **Innovation and emerging challenges**

To be a safety net for all young people in times of uncertainty, more resilient youth work structures are required that are grounded in evidence-informed innovation principles, encompassing long-term thinking, reflexivity and strategy-based youth work. A culture of innovation in youth work practice should be fostered as well as the capacity of youth work to navigate European and worldwide transformations;

### **Policy frameworks**

Youth work should be an integral part of youth policy, systematically incorporating the needs and measures regarding youth work into youth policies, both vertically and horizontally;

### **A strategic framework for youth work development**

The Bonn Process offers a framework for the youth work community of practice to consider what it could be doing for youth work itself. However, the growth of youth work throughout Europe would be even better served if European institutions further aligned their visions for youth work within their respective youth strategies. This requires a joint letter of commitment or memorandum of understanding, connecting the Bonn Process to wider pan-European education and learning initiatives.



## Shaping the Bonn Process for and by all!

The whole youth work community of practice and all stakeholders in Europe within their different mandates, roles and capacities are invited and encouraged to contribute to the development of youth work within the Bonn Process. This includes youth work stakeholders at local (including municipal), regional, national, and European level. It involves youth workers and youth leaders, youth work managers, project carriers, accredited and independent youth work organisations, trainers, researchers, educators of youth workers, local communities and municipalities, National Agencies for Erasmus+ Youth and European Solidarity Corps, youth representations and young people, and policy-makers for youth. With this multi-player and multi-layer approach, the Bonn Process brings self-empowerment to the whole field: Everybody active in and for youth work can participate in the Bonn Process!

## Be part of it!

Different stakeholders can plan manifold action: A team of researchers could, for instance, research about the impact of a crisis and inform policy-makers; an open youth centre could start a peer-learning initiative among youth centres in rural areas across Europe; a formal educator of youth workers could introduce a new training model – just to name a few ideas... Much more can happen!

Discover more about the Bonn Process, read inspiring stories, and find out how to connect with others and get involved! Refer to our website at [www.eywc2020.eu](http://www.eywc2020.eu) for more information about the European Youth Work Agenda, Bonn Process, final Declaration, and much more.

Contact JUGEND für Europa, the National Agency (Germany) for the EU programmes Erasmus+ Youth and European Solidarity Corps, at [convention@jfemail.de](mailto:convention@jfemail.de).

# Bonn Process

## Growing Youth Work across Europe by implementing the European Youth Work Agenda

