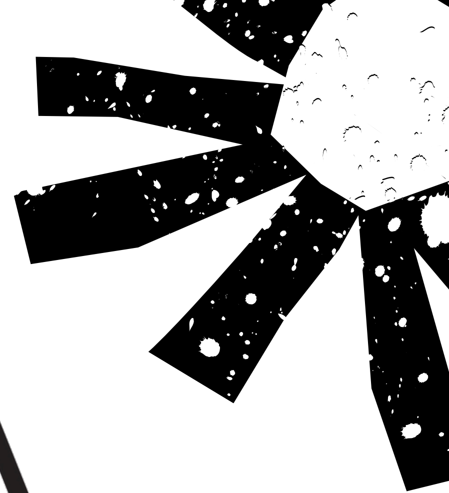

QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR ALL

STATE OF THE ART REPORT

QUALITY ASSURANCE FOR ALL.
ENSURING QUALITY OF YOUTH WORK THROUGH INTERSECTIONALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

KA220-YOU-000159323-02

THIS OUTPUT HAS BEEN REALISED WITH THE CONTRIBUTION OF ALL THE PROJECT PARTNERS

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Executive Summary

Youth work is recognised in Europe as "a powerful means for equipping youth with key personal, professional and entrepreneurial competences and skills, and as a bridge into education, training or work, thus preventing exclusion".[1] Most youth work organisations in EU Member States operate as independent civil society organisations (CSOs), non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and other types of organisations (e.g. youth clubs). These organisations need to be accountable to their stakeholders, including funders and the communities within which they operate.

Improving quality, innovation and recognition of youth work is one of the key areas of action to support empowerment of young people in the current European Union (EU) Youth Strategy 2019 – 2027 (*EU Youth Strategy*, n.d.). At the same time, we argue quality assurance processes in youth work that are developed and implemented using intersectional and human rights-based approaches can be more inclusive and empowering. By taking an approach based on intersectionality and human rights, we seek quality assurance that is truly representative of all stakeholders, and that involves them throughout the design, implementation, and evaluation of youth work. The aim is to support quality assurance in youth work based on a participatory and democratic process.

This review explores the state-of-the-art in quality assurance (QA) for civil society organisations, with a particular focus on those in the non-formal education and youth work sectors. In the past decades there have been some developments at the European, national, and local levels that support youth organisations to improve the quality of their projects. A majority of the examples provided in this review are quality assurance frameworks/systems developed by institutions (e.g. European, governmental, municipal, etc.), which are often external to the realities of the youth work organisations. Moreover, quality assurance frameworks and tools identified have not explicitly introduced the perspectives of intersectionality and human rights to youth work.

The research findings shared in this review are intended to serve as a foundation for engaging youth workers, trainers, and young people to develop an organisational quality assurance model for youth work organisations, including a monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEAL) framework so as to encourage better ownership of quality assurance processes in youth work. This model addresses, on the one hand, overall organisational quality assurance for youth work organisations, and on the other, effective evaluation of specific projects in non-formal education (NFE) settings to ensure accountability to funders, as well as to the various participants and stakeholders.

The review is organised as follows: section I introduces the aims and objectives of our project, key questions to be addressed, concept definitions, and the methodology used to conduct the literature research; section II discusses our findings about the use of human rights-based and intersectionality-based approaches in quality assurance and evaluation;

[1] https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/policy-fields/10-youth-work

and section III closes this report with the main findings related to QA in non-formal education, and national- and regional-level examples of quality assurance frameworks in youth work. In this section we also include our findings about main approaches and tools used for ensuring the quality of NFE and youth work activities.

1. Context, aims, and objectives

"Improving quality, innovation and recognition of youth work" is one of the key areas of action to support empowerment of young people in the current European Union (EU) Youth Strategy 2019 – 2027 (*EU Youth Strategy*, n.d.). Even if there are no official statistics about the number of youth workers across the EU, about 800 of them think that "developing quality youth work" is paramount, and are eager to know more about "toolkits, standards for youth work and guidelines to develop quality in youth work." (DG EAC, 2021, p.ii).

We argue that tools for youth work that are developed and implemented based on an intersectional and HRB approaches can be truly inclusive and empowering. We understand intersectionality as a perspective that helps us better grasp the complexity of power relations and young people's lived experiences. As Rabe et al. (2021) suggest, intersectionality is "fundamentally relational" and allows us to understand "how systems of division based on race, citizenship status, class and so forth are interconnected and often reinforce one another" (Rabe et al., 2021, p.229). Youth work in and of itself has the potential to help us overcome asymmetrical power relations, but a shift in the approaches to quality assurance and evaluation is needed so that multiple voices and experiences from young people experience are effectively acknowledged and represented in youth work. Hence, we need quality assurance frameworks and evaluation tools that are designed and implemented from an intersectional and HRB perspective.

Nevertheless, while there has been considerable progress in developing quality assurance tools and competence frameworks for youth work in the last decade[2], there are few quality assurance or evaluation tools that *explicitly* introduce intersectionality or human rights-based approaches to youth work. Apart from some resources that provide checklists and step-by-step guides, there aren't comprehensive models that put intersectionality and human rights at the heart of their approach, and only a small number of articles addressing both human rights and intersectionality-based approaches and evaluation. Moreover, these frameworks often are developed from a deficit-based perspective – e.g. they are intended to help "excluded" or "marginalised" youth - thus perpetuating discriminatory labels and assumptions about young people based on class, gender, ethnicity, age, sex, etc. (St Croix, 2018).

The Erasmus+ Quality Assurance for All project aims to address this need by supporting youth organisations in introducing an intersectional and HRB approach to their own work. To achieve this overall goal, we have set three specific objectives for the overall project:

O1. To explore the key features of existing frameworks currently used to ensure the quality of non-formal learning activities within the field of youth work.

O2. Through active participation in developmental processes, to cultivate competences among young people, trainers, and youth workers, to design and

[2] see "Quality Assurance of Non-Formal Education a Framework for Youth Organisations" of the European Youth Forum; "Promoting Quality in Youth Work Practice in Europe" of the EU-Council of Europe Youth Partnership; and the "Youth Work Portfolio" of the Council of Europe

implement a quality assurance model tailored to non-formal education activities that promote an intersectional approach, human rights, and common EU values.
O3. Fostering the promotion of an intersectional approach, human rights, and common EU values within the framework of quality assurance for youth work

The present report addresses O1 through the realisation of three specific tasks:

- Identifying concepts underpinning intersectionality and human-rights based approaches and how these may shape quality assurance in youth work.
- Identifying the main approaches and/or models used for quality assurance in the European youth sector, focusing on the organisational level (including their mission and operational aspects).
- Describing tools and models used for evaluation of non-formal education projects which are aligned with their mission (addressing intersectionality, human rights, and common EU values) and also require accountability to stakeholders.

The key questions guiding our research work were the following:

- Are there specific definitions of quality assurance in non-formal education in EU Member States – addressed in academic / grey literature?
    - If so, how do they relate to youth work?
- What are the key features of effective quality assurance frameworks and processes in non-formal education? How are evaluation methodologies used in NFE, at the organisational and project level?
- What are the implications of introducing an intersectional and HRB approach to the development of a QA framework for our project?

1.1. Key concepts

Before we started our literature search, we explored some common concepts– i.e. non-formal education and youth work (see Box 1). While intersectionality and human rights are also key concepts in our project, we have not settled on single definitions for these terms as we would like to explore these concepts throughout our project.

First, in terms of a definition for non-formal education (NFE), it can be argued there isn't a one-size-fits-all definition in the literature. Generally, NFE has been defined as a learning methodology based on contextualised experiences, where participation is voluntary, and it may take place in projects, trainings, out-of-school activities, online or onsite, in conferences or seminars, etc. (Hopma & Sergean, 2015; Paolillo et al., n.d.). Bucun and Vasilachi (Bucun & Vasilachi, 2020) add that NFE is intentionally organised, taking place outside the traditional school system. Several authors, taking up the lifelong learning perspective promoted by the European Union, have argued that there is no need to place NFE in contrast to formal or informal approaches, (Bello, 2020; Norqvist & Leffler, 2017). However, from a system perspective formal and non-formal education are not necessarily integrated "because of the difference with which each is treated and financed" (Norqvist and Leffler, 2017, p.239).
Indeed, in European education systems formal and non-formal education do not always

fall under the same governance structures or budget allocations (Taru & Krzaklewska, 2020).

Second, as highlighted in Box 1, the definition of youth work used in this report relies on the understanding of the European Commission.

Box 1 – Key concepts used in our report

For the purpose of the Quality Assurance for All project, **non-formal education** (NFE) is understood based on the definition provided by the European Youth Foundation:[3]

> refers to planned, structured programmes and processes of personal and social education for young people designed to improve a range of skills and competences, outside the formal educational curriculum. Non-formal education is what happens in places such as youth organisations, sports clubs and drama and community groups where young people meet (…). Non-formal education should also be:
>
> - voluntary
> - accessible to everyone (ideally)
> - an organised process with educational objectives
> - participatory
> - learner-centred
> - about learning life skills and preparing for active citizenship
> - based on involving both individual and group learning with a collective approach
> - holistic and process-oriented
> - based on experience and action
> - organised on the basis of the needs of the participants.
>
> Formal, non-formal and informal education are complementary and mutually reinforcing elements of a lifelong learning process.

With regards to **youth work**, we use the definition provided in the Report from the Expert Group on Youth Work Quality Systems in the EU Member States (European Commission, 2015):

Actions directed towards young people regarding activities where they take part voluntarily, designed for supporting their personal and social development through non-formal and informal learning" (European Commission, 2015, p. 12).

[3] Retrieved from: https://www.coe.int/en/web/european-youth-foundation/definitions

1.2. *Research Methodology*

This report includes findings from academic and grey literature. The proposed research strategy was validated by partner organisations at the kick off meeting of the project in November 2023.

The desk-based research comprised a search for relevant literature through online scholarly databases (e.g. Google Scholar, JStor, ERIC, Research Rabbit, etc.) and grey literature. Sources identified are primarily in English. Key concepts/key words for literature search, included terms such as quality assurance, non-formal education, youth work, evaluation, intersectionality, and human rights (see the Annex 1 for a complete list). The scope of the search was set to the last 20 years (2003-2023) and included literature from the project partner countries (Belgium French Community, France, Italy, and Romania).

Since we didn't want to restrict our search to sources only in English, each partner organisation contributed with sources in their own language (i.e. French, Italian, and Romanian), by filling a template form that included a summary of key findings in English and details about the original publication.

We opted for a thematic analysis method, used in the social sciences to identify and analyse patterns within data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). All sources identified[4] were coded using the QSR International's NVivo software. An inductive approach to coding was preferred, meaning that we didn't use an a priori codebook to organise the data from sources analysed.

[4] Sources in English, French, Italian, and Romanian account for over 100 articles, 10 books, and over 50 reports.

2. Introducing intersectionality, human rights, and EU common values in evaluation for quality assurance purposes

In this section, we highlight a selection of academic articles on evaluation processes and methods that are grounded in human rights-based and/or intersectionality-based approaches relevant for quality assurance of youth work organisations and for project evaluation.

This is an understudied area. In the academic literature, we identified only two articles addressing evaluation and HRBA/ intersectionality (Guendel, 2012; Hankivsky & Cormier, 2019). A third academic article identified describes an intersectionality-based approach to evaluation of a medical curriculum (Muntinga et al., 2016), which has some relevance for evaluation of non-formal education in youth work.

In his 2012 article, Guendel explores how HRBA can shape more effective evaluations that include the voices of advocates. The HRBA is a central pillar of the 1945 Charter of the United Nations, which sets international standards to promote and protect human rights. HRBA principles are embedded in international charters recognising rights for children, women and indigenous groups, democratic governance frameworks, national laws, social agreements, and specific programmes. HRBA has thus been institutionalised over the decades through different policy and legal instruments.

The paradoxical effect of the success of HRBA, Guendel (2012) observes, has been that advocacy groups at times see their debates and demands as having been co-opted by governments. Guendel (2012) suggests that an important way to address the tension between institutionalised rights and advocacy-groups' desires to further the human rights agenda is by augmenting governmental social indicators and monitoring instruments developed with social evaluation methods that consider diverse viewpoints and experiences.

At the same time, Guendel (2012) warns of fragmentation into specific or special rights groups engaged in advocacy and recommends that evaluation methods need to "weave the particular into a vision of the holistic." (p. 7) Social evaluation that is "more personalized, more democratic, and with greater capacity to unveil intercultural and subjective aspects" and which provides a way to focus on the main subjects of human rights, and not the institutional structures, is a way to achieve a better balance. Importantly, Guendel positions social evaluation as part of the overall policy cycle (policy design, implementation, and evaluation).

While human-rights based approaches have been taken up internationally over the last 80 years, intersectionality-based approaches are much more recent. The concept of intersectionality has roots in the discourse of black feminist advocates and scholars, dating back to American social justice leaders Sojourner Truth (1851), and later Angela Davis and Audre Lorde in the mid-20th century, but the term 'intersectionality' itself was first coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989. Intersectionality-based approaches have only

gained traction in the last two decades, and by now has been diffused throughout range of disciplines (Guan et al., 2021). Nevertheless, as noted above we identified only a small number of academic articles that discuss intersectionality and evaluation (although these articles do not address youth work).

In a 2011 article, Hankivsky and Cormier explore the implications of intersectionality-based approaches for public policy development, implementation, and evaluation. They note that the application of an intersectionality framework for policy analysis is under-theorised, and methods are "in the nascent stages". We note that based on the scarcity of literature identified for this report, this gap remains 13 years since the publication of their article.

The 2011 Hankivsky and Cormier article highlights two examples in which an intersectionality-based approach is used throughout the policy cycle. First, Bishwarkarma, Hunt and Zajicek (2007), describe how an intersectionality-based approach can be used in policy analysis:

- Phase 1: Agenda setting/ problem definition. At this stage, it is important to understand whether a specific policy problem is experienced differently by different social groups and requires an intersectionality approach.
- Phase 2: Policy formulation. Policy options need to be reviewed to determine if there are foreseeable impacts on vulnerable and marginalised groups. This may require further research.
- Phase 3: Policy implementation (monitoring). Financial and human resources are mobilized to implement the policy approach.
- Phase 4: Policy evaluation. In this final phase the focus is on "…whether policy objectives have been achieved given the intersectional nature of the problem...." (p. 222).

The second example Hankivsky and Cormier share is the 'multistrand model' by Parken and Young (2008). This model takes a stage-based approach, which includes: mapping, visioning, road testing, and monitoring and evaluation. In the first step, a problem is explored from the perspective of all strands. The second step involves mapping of information to support 'equality mainstreaming'. The third step involves discussions on what can be done to support transformative change and promote equality and human rights. Commonalities are identified in order to support solutions that may benefit all. The fourth step involved "road testing," in order to identify unintended consequences, based on input of key stakeholder groups. The fifth and final step, "monitoring and evaluation," involves tracing improvement, with indicators tracking impact for different groups. Ongoing consultation with main stakeholder groups is an important part of this process.

The advantage of an intersectionality-based approach, Hankivsky and Cormier (2011) suggest, is that it "…reject[s] binary thinking in policy". Attention to diversity, they argue, "…changes the policy questions that are asked, the kind of data that are collected, how data are collected, and how data are disaggregated." (p. 220).

The third article identified for this review by Muntinga et al.(2016) provides insights on how curriculum may support medical students to develop competences to address intersectional identity of patients. These competences are relevant for youth workers interacting with diverse youth participants, as well as for evaluation of the NFE they offer.

The 2016 Muntinga et al. article explores the extent to which the medical curriculum at the Vrije Universiteit (VU/Free University) Medical Centre School in Amsterdam addresses the "…values, experiences and needs of a diverse range of patients." The authors suggest that a diversity-responsive curriculum should include three main objectives: knowledge and skills; communication, and reflexivity.

- *Knowledge* refers to recognition and understanding of relevant differences between different cultural groups, and of the disparities and inequalities between different groups, and an understanding of the interaction between different characteristics (e.g. gender, age, sexual orientation, and so on).
- *Communication* refers to skills needed in interactions with individuals from diverse backgrounds. This may involve language barriers as well as understanding different relational expectations and preferences of individuals from different cultural backgrounds.
- *Reflexivity* refers to self-reflection. A curriculum that includes 'self-reflexivity training' supports learners to '…acquire the skills to take on a critical attitude towards oneself. Such skills help them recognize their own prejudices towards patients who do not share their own sociocultural background, which is essential in order to preserve …[an individual's] dignity and.' autonomy and deliver high-quality, personalized care in a pluriform society,' (p. 550).

Muntinga et al.(2016) argue that learning objectives need to be formulated so that they do not encourage "essentialist or fixed perceptions of social groups or categories and their value systems, health practices and health outcomes." In other words, while paying attention to different categories related to culture, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and social class, it is important to avoid stereotypes, and the risk of "simplifying the complexity of lived experiences." (p. 545)

Research questions addressed in the article were on 1) stakeholders' opinions on embedding diversity in the VU curriculum; 2) appropriate criteria for developing a 'diversity-responsive curriculum'; and 3) the extent to which diversity was being addressed, based on a mapping of curricular content against the three main objectives for learning described above. In their evaluation the authors identified existing good practices, barriers to implementation, and areas for improvement. The authors also suggest that, beyond the curriculum, 'diversity responsiveness' needs to be addressed at the institutional level.

While the articles summarised in this section are only indirectly related to NFE and youth work, they include relevant insights on how a more nuanced and complex view of how programmes may help to shape more inclusive and democratic quality assurance

processes. In the next section, we shift from literature exploring how the concepts of intersectionality and human-rights based approaches may strengthen evaluation to a parallel literature focused on quality assurance models and processes in NFE and youth work. Opportunities to integrate intersectionality and human rights-based approaches in quality assurance/evaluation are explored in subsequent sections.

3. What does the literature say about quality assurance in non-formal education?

The Quality Assurance for All project focuses on supporting youth work organisations to use tools that will help ensure 1) overall organisational quality and 2) the use of a monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEAL) framework for project evaluation. A majority of the examples found in the literature are quality assurance frameworks/systems developed by institutions, often external to the realities of the youth work organisations. We also seek to engage youth workers, trainers, and young people to develop an organisational quality assurance model for youth work organisations, including a monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEAL) framework, and based on a human rights and/or intersectionality-based approach, so as to encourage better ownership of quality assurance processes in youth work.

Below we discuss the findings related to quality assurance (QA) in youth work (QA of the organisation; NFE project evaluation); and key features and methods used for quality assurance in NFE, including monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEAL) frameworks. We conclude this section with a discussion of the main gaps identified in quality assurance in NFE, emphasising the development of an internal quality assurance process for youth work and project evaluation which is the focus of the Quality Assurance for All project.

3.1. Quality assurance in non-formal education

There are three main areas to develop quality standards/criteria for NFE and youth work: quality of structures, quality of processes, and quality of outcomes/impact (Fennes & Otten, 2008). However, demonstrating the quality of NFE and youth work is not a straightforward task due to the variety of outcomes (e.g. expanding learners' cultural horizons, supporting professional development and employability, fostering inclusion, etc.) and context were NFE takes place.

With regards to the development of quality criteria and standards for NFE, most contributions come from the youth work sector, following progress made at the national and regional level. Quality assurance systems and frameworks take a variety of forms, including evaluation of organisations and projects, national occupational standards (e.g. Ireland), and certification of training providers (O'Donovan, 2020).

Based on our findings, this section proposes key features for evaluation in NFE and youth work. The Quality Assurance for All project sees the evaluation process as an ongoing cycle where improvements are introduced throughout, and not only after the project has ended. We also identified three 'critical points' in the development of quality assurance tools for evaluating processes and outcomes: 1) the lack of democratic accountability mechanisms that acknowledge the diversity of practices, perspectives, and experiences of people involved in NFE and youth work; 2) the confusion around what is considered 'valid' or 'reliable' knowledge when it comes to demonstrating the contribution of NFE and youth work; and 3) the 'deficit narrative' or 'deficit-based language' used to build narratives about the impact of youth work.

From a quality management perspective, QA processes in non-formal education (NFE) usually encompass a regular monitoring and evaluation of various dimensions of a system, project, or programme so as to maximise the chances of achieving the desired outcomes, according to pre-established performance indicators (Latchem, 2012, p.15). In this perspective, QA processes are often led externally, from the top down. Institutions and organisations may also put in place internal QA processes to follow their own projects and programmes.

Quality should be considered at three levels:

- the macro-level, meaning the level of educational systems and policies at regional, national and European levels;
- the meso-level, meaning the level of individual educational institutions and organisations;
- the micro-level, meaning the level of the teaching-learning processes (Fennes and Otten, 2008).

For the purposes of this project, we situate our work between both the meso- and the micro-level. On the one hand, we want to investigate the organisational aspects (meso-level) that could enable or challenge the introduction of a human rights and /or intersectionality-based approach. On the other, we are concerned about supporting youth workers and participants, so that it reflects in the outcomes and long-term impact (micro-level).

An important contribution from Fennes and Otten (2008) that we consider in our project are the three key areas to develop quality standards/criteria:

- Quality of structures (also referred to as “quality of context”): general conditions under which educational institutions and organisations are working (legal, organisational, and social context); human resources, including competences of teachers/trainers and training of staff; educational, financial, infrastructure, technical and other resources, etc.
- Quality of processes: the way in which educational organisations try to achieve their objectives – selection, design and organisation of contents and methods, consideration of the learners’ needs, guidance of learners, relation between teachers/trainers and learners, etc.
- Quality of outcomes and impact: the impact of the educational processes, such as the acquisition and development of knowledge, competences, motivation, attitudes, values etc. as well as the capacity, motivation, and commitment to apply the competences acquired in future learning and work (Fennes and Otten, 2008).

While these areas provide a general idea of what to consider when developing quality standards/criteria for organisations and institutions working in education, other factors could be considered as influential – such as the context in which the activities delivered take place; the format of the activities (e.g. duration, learning modalities, teacher/trainer vs

learner ratio, etc.); the pedagogical and methodological approaches chosen; the dynamic between learners and teachers/trainers; how are the activities evaluated; etc. (Fennes and Otten, 2008).

3.2. *Demonstrating the quality of NFE activities*

The quality of non-formal education has been linked to a variety of outcomes, such as expanding learners' cultural horizons, supporting professional development and employability, fostering inclusion, and providing leisure activities for learners (Hadžibegović, n.d.; Vild and Dumitriu, 2018). Nonetheless, the NFE sector is often tied to an external demand (e.g. from public or private donors and funders) to demonstrate the quality of their activities by measuring outcomes and matching externally imposed performance indicators.

Demonstrating the quality of NFE activities is not always a simple task. Bucun and Vasilachi (2020) provide a list of "advantages" of NFE, including that activities have clear learning objectives and efficient resource management; is active, interactive, and offers diversified learning methods; recognises and values previous experience and experiential learning; and offers positive personal development for participants. In a study conducted by Căpiță et al (2011), the authors discuss two key European objectives (i.e. the openness of the learning environment and the increased attractiveness of learning). The study emphasises the value of NFE environments in the current context, highlighting its adaptability to individual needs, occurrence outside the school schedule, and lower costs compared to formal education (Căpiță et al, 2011).

Second, research points to the fragmented nature of quality assurance frameworks used in NFE (Fennes & Otten, 2008; O'Donovan, 2020), which as we argued earlier, is linked to the difficulty of measuring the diverse contexts, processes, and outcomes in NFE (Fennes and Otten, 2008). As of today, the main contributions in terms of quality criteria/standards in NFE come from the youth sector, with quality assurance frameworks developed by the Council of Europe (2016) and the European Youth Forum (2013). In their work "Quality in non-formal education and training in the field of European youth work" Fennes and Otten (2008) summarised the main quality criteria/standards for NFE as follows (Fennes & Otten, 2008, p.23):

1. The activity is underpinned by the core principles and practices of non-formal education, such as personal development, learning in groups, interactive, participatory and experiential learning.
2. The activity meets identified community needs.
3. The activity is consciously conceptualised and framed to meet identified and appropriate objectives as well as to allow for unexpected outcomes.
4. The activity is well designed, planned and carried out, in both educational and organisational terms.
5. The activity is adequately resourced.
6. The activity demonstrably uses its resources effectively and efficiently.
7. The activity is monitored and evaluated.

8. The activity acknowledges and makes visible its outcomes and results.

As pointed out by the authors, these quality criteria address the micro-level of quality in education (i.e. the training-learning process). While these criteria might be considered too generic, the authors acknowledge the debate around measuring quality in NFE, which is "characterised by a fear – primarily of practitioners – that measures and instruments for quality assurance and quality control will formalise non-formal education and, therefore, take away a main quality (sic) aspect of non-formal education" (Fennes & Otten, 2008, p. 20). This "fear of formalisation" (by means of focusing only on measurable outcomes and impact instead of considering other qualitative aspects) has been highlighted by a number authors in relation to the youth work sector (Bamber et al., 2012; Crescenzo, 2023; de St Croix, 2016; de St Croix & Doherty, 2022; Dickson et al., 2013a; Leone & Della Mura, 2022; McNeil et al., 2012; Morciano & Scardigno, 2014; Morgan, 2009; Şenyuva & Kiilakoski, 2017). Contributions to the discussion around quality assurance in NFE that have come from the youth sector are analysed in the following section.

3.3. *Focus on youth work: quality criteria and quality assurance frameworks*

As noted by Devlin et al (2017), "when practised with young people, non-formal education is increasingly seen as synonymous with 'youth work'"(Devlin et al., 2017, p.9). While conducting the desk research for this report, most of the sources identified on quality assurance in NFE were found in the youth work literature (Bertozzi, 2015). Main documents from the European Union (EU) and the Council of Europe (COE) related to NFE put both concepts side by side and sometimes, use them interchangeably. The working paper "Pathways 2.0 towards recognition of non-formal learning/education and of youth work in Europe" (2011)[5] defines NFE as "the key activity, but also the key competence of youth work" (p.4). In a report drafted by the Expert Group on Youth Work Quality Systems in the EU Member States (European Commission, 2015), youth work is defined as "actions directed towards young people regarding activities where they take part voluntarily, designed for supporting their personal and social development through non-formal and informal learning" (European Commission, 2015, p.12). As stated in Section I, we will use this definition of youth work throughout this report.

Similar to what happens with NFE, *what exactly* is encompassed in the concept of youth work has been extensively discussed in the literature. There seems to be an agreement, however, that youth work is based on voluntary participation, openness, and on experiential learning opportunities (Carmo, 2022; Gormally & Coburn, 2014); its primary concern ("the primary client") is the young person (Gormally & Coburn, 2014, p. 870); it has "a diverse range of fields, goals, and methods of intervention" (Morciano & Scardigno, 2014, p.25); and supports young people "in becoming members of democratic societies, active citizens, bonded and integrated with other people (…) It helps to develop valuable individuals, not only a "value" on a labour market" (Moś, 2020, p.47). Youth work activities

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[5] Retrieved from: https://www.alliance-network.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/Pathways_II_towards_recognition_of_non-formal_learning_Jan_2011.pdf

may have social, cultural, educational, and/or political aims (Rambaree et al., 2017), and take place in diverse contexts, much like NFE activities.
With regards to the development of quality criteria, and more generally, to quality assurance in youth work, recent publications at the European level have offered important insights on progress made at the national and regional level, as well as some general standards for youth organisations to improve quality. A mapping report published by the Youth Partnership of the Council of Europe and the European Union (the Youth Partnership) focused on policy-level promotion of quality in youth work, including innovative approaches and methods of quality assurance (O'Donovan, 2020). Among the main findings, the study provides examples of policy initiatives undertaken in Germany, Luxembourg, Sweden, and Ukraine to promote quality in youth work. In terms of innovative approaches in the (voluntary) youth sector, the report highlights contexts where open youth work[6] is practised (e.g. Austria, Germany, and Sweden) as well as countries such as Ireland where there is a mandatory quality standards framework for youth work; the National Youth Council has the mission to support youth organisations to comply with this national framework and further improve the quality of youth work practice (O'Donovan, 2020). Methods for assuring quality in youth work will be discussed in a later subsection.

The previously cited report from the Expert Group on Youth Work Quality Systems (European Commission, 2015) also addresses the question of quality in youth work. According to the authors, quality in youth work is related to its aims and outcomes, as well as "to the preconditions and work processes/methods that are set up in order to make these outcomes come true" (European Commission, 2015, p.9). The preconditions include aims, budget, ethical guidelines, organisation, youth worker competence, work routines, and facilities and equipment; whereas work processes/methods refer to how tasks are managed (e.g. processes for setting aims; methods for mapping the different needs, interests and experiences of young people; processes for structured dialogue with young people; methods for documenting and making non-formal learning visible; methods for evaluation and assessment; and processes for change management) (European Commission, 2015).

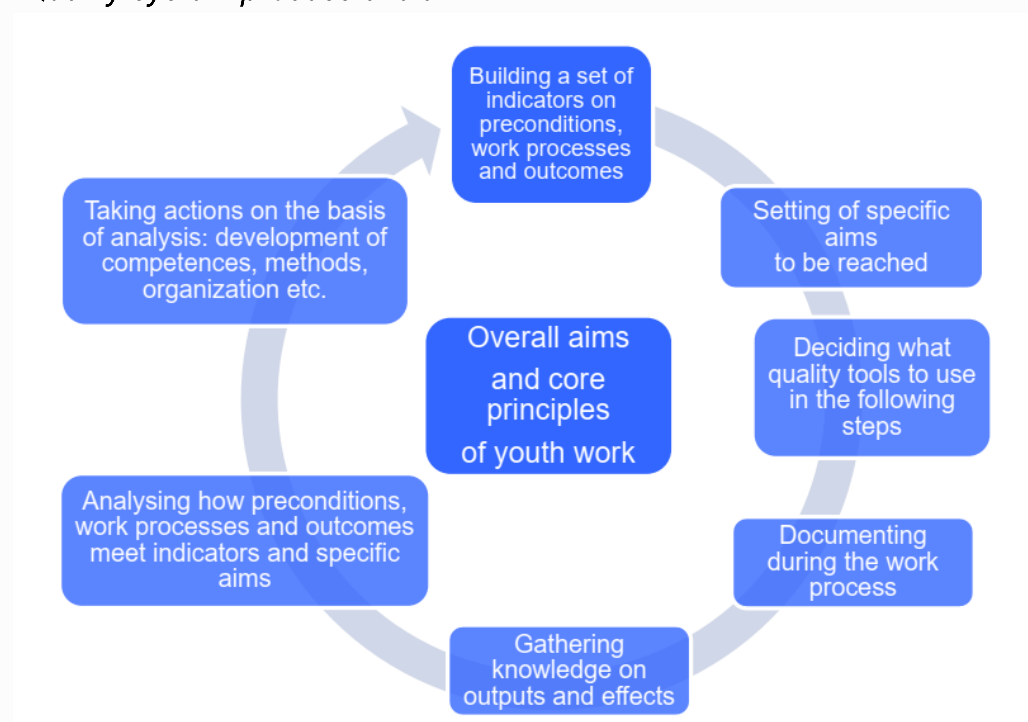
The report describes outcomes of youth work as either quantitative ("the directly quantifiable amounts that have occurred as a result of youth work") and qualitative ("what actually happens to young people, how they develop, as a result of their taking part in youth work") (European Commission, 2015, p.18). It's worth noting the emphasis on the idea that qualitative effects may be measured, such as perceived experiences, changed attitudes, or soft skills developed. In order to do so a "holistic approach" to quality development should be "carried out continuously in a systematic way and address the youth work context as a whole, from policy to practice…all relevant stakeholders, from young people to politicians, must be engaged in the process and meet each other as equal

[6] According to the report, open youth work is "not only open to all young people, with a low entry and participation threshold, but also seeks to reach out to young people, particularly 'hard-to-reach' young people, in location-based settings and through mobile (detached) youth work. Open youth work is also open to new ideas and new ways of working with young people. It is a form of youth work most removed from systems, regulations and oversight." (O'Donovan, 2020, p.33)

partners" (European Commission, 2015, p.9). The report also provides a discussion on indicators (what they are and how they can be used for quality assurance), although it acknowledges that there is a "long tradition of purely quantitative indicators…(and) a significant lack of indicators related to the qualitative aspects of youth work" (European Commission, 2015, p.20).

An interesting contribution of this study is the concept of "quality system",[7] a process circle connected to a support system needed to enable change. An illustration of this process circle is shown on Figure 1.

Figure 1: Quality system process circle



Source: European Commission. (2015). Quality Youth Work: A common framework for the further development of youth work. Report from the Expert Group on Youth Work Quality Systems in the EU Member States, p. 23.

A third publication that proposes a focused approach to quality assurance in youth work are the "Quality standards in education and training activities" from the Youth Department (YD) of the Council of Europe.[8] Initially published in 2005 and updated in 2016, this quality assurance model integrates the feedback collected by the YD in 2014-2015 among youth organisations. It's interesting to note that the document explicitly addresses "the mission of non-formal education activities with young people in promoting the right to human rights education, peace-building and intercultural dialogue where intercultural learning has a central role in content and methodology of the activities" (p.2). The quality standards

[7] "A set of tools designed for gathering knowledge on how different ways of organising and conducting youth work corresponds with desired outcomes, combined with corresponding tools to manage this knowledge in a way that enables adequate support for the development of quality" (European Commission, 2015, p.22)
[8] Retrieved from: https://rm.coe.int/ddcp-yd-etd-2016-202-quality-standards-yd-et-activities/16807c8bb9

presented in the report are applicable to the activities of the YD - and by extension, to other youth organisations working in cooperation with the YD. Box 2 lists the 15 quality criteria and standards from the YD. The document also provides a list of indicators for each criterion; for the purpose of our project, criterion 7 ("An integrated approach to intercultural learning, participation, and human rights education") and 11 ("A thorough and open process of evaluation") are of particular relevance, as these explicitly address the issue of introducing a human rights-based approach and the use of project evaluation as a means to support internal QA. See Annex 2 for the indicators proposed in this document.

Box 2: Quality criteria and standards in education and training activities, YD of the Council of Europe

1. A relevant needs assessment
2. Concrete, achievable and assessable objectives
3. The definition of competences addressed and learning outcomes for the participants
4. The relevance to the Council of Europe programme and YD priorities
5. An adequate and timely preparation process
6. A competent team of trainers and facilitators
7. An integrated approach to intercultural learning, participation, and human rights education
8. Adequate recruitment and selection of participants
9. A consistent practice of non-formal education principles and approaches
10. Adequate, accessible, and timely documentation
11. A thorough and open process of evaluation
12. Optimal working conditions and environment
13. Adequate institutional support and an integrated follow-up
14. Relevant visibility and communication
15. Concern for innovation and research.

Source: Quality standards in education and training activities of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe, 2016, Youth Department of the Council of Europe

A not-so-recent (but nonetheless relevant) publication from the European Youth Forum (YFJ) related to QA in youth work is the "Revised Policy Paper on Non-Formal Education: A Framework for Indicating and Assuring Quality,"[9] adopted in 2008 and reviewed in 2011. The document is considered as a "roadmap" for the development of a QA framework for NFE activities in the youth sector (Garrahy, 2014, p.36), and provides a series of guidelines on how to develop a QA framework from a participatory perspective with multiple stakeholders. A key feature of the QA process is to have both *internal* and *external* QA processes and provide a series of indicators related to four areas: resources/coordination; educators; content; and learning process. This policy paper was followed by the publication of a Manual on Quality Assurance of NFE[10] in 2013, which was

[9] Retrieved from: https://www.youthforum.org/files/Revised-Policy-Paper-on-Non-Formal-Education-A-Framework-for-indicating-and-assuring-quality-2011.pdf
[10] See https://issuu.com/yomag/docs/nfeqa_manual_single

piloted in 2009-2012 and supported with a series of training cycles. The Manual provides a step-by-step cycle to develop a QA framework, with explanations and examples, and it's aimed at youth organisations working in NFE. Although the Manual undertakes a participatory approach and tackles issues of diversity and representation, there isn't an explicit use of concepts related to an intersectional and human rights-based approach.

Fennes and Otten (2008) also expanded their analysis of quality in NFE towards elaborating quality criteria and standards specific to the youth field. We will highlight two specific standards relevant to our project: first, monitoring and evaluation processes are addressed as an "ongoing instrument to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the activity during the process of preparation and implementation as well as to prevent failures" (Fennes & Otten, 2008, p.47). The authors also outline what should be encompassed in an evaluation (e.g. ex-ante, ongoing, ex-post, and final evaluation) and how these should be used (e.g. contribute to learning and to further development). Second, there is a specific quality standard related to the integration of principles and practices of intercultural learning in NFE activities; for this standard, "develop a positive attitude towards human rights and against, racism, antisemitism, xenophobia and intolerance" is listed as a key indicator. The full list of proposed standards is provided in Annex 3.

3.4. *National- and regional-level examples of quality assurance frameworks in youth work*

Through our literature search we also identified national- and regional-level examples of quality assurance systems and frameworks, including partner countries in our project (i.e. Belgium-FR, France, Italy, and Romania). These examples were drawn from previous publications from the Youth Partnership (O'Donovan et al., 2020; Taru & Krzaklewska, 2020) and the Expert Group on Youth Work Quality Systems (European Commission, 2015), among others.

A recent mapping exercise about the educational paths of youth workers (O'Donovan et al., 2020), presents the results from a consultation conducted in 2017 with national correspondents of the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy (EKCYP) and relevant ministries, institutions, and bodies in Council of Europe Member States. Among some of the key findings related to quality assurance of youth work, the authors conclude that:

> respondents from 18 of the 41 countries surveyed mention some kind of quality assurance for youth work in their countries. In 13 countries (Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Turkey and the United Kingdom (England and Wales)), the quality assurance framework is supported by documents at national level; in one (Iceland), it is organised at local or municipal level; and in four others (Belarus, Finland, Liechtenstein and Sweden) it is mainly organised as internal quality control techniques within the organisations delivering youth work or within a network of such organisations. In Azerbaijan and Georgia, the national quality

assurance frameworks for youth work are currently being developed by the ministries in charge of youth policy (O'Donovan et al., 2020, p.33).

The authors also underline that most of the examples were approaches and methods for quality assurance of youth work rather than quality assurance frameworks. This observation could be explained by the need for a better understanding of what is comprised in a quality assurance framework or system (O'Donovan et al., 2020).

The report from the Expert Group on Youth Work Quality Systems (European Commission, 2015) also offers examples of quality assurance frameworks and systems. At the regional level, the report describes examples such as:

- Finland and the Youth Work Quality Assessment.
- Sweden and the quality circle for the development of local youth work (driven by KEKS, a network of 41 local departments for youth work).

At the national level, the report highlights examples from Austria, Estonia, Luxembourg, and The Netherlands, among others (see Annex 4 for more details about these regional- and national-level examples). In countries where there are national-level policies regulating youth work (e.g. Estonia, Finland, Luxembourg, Malta) the chances are that youth work is a structured career choice or there is a professionalisation path with specific requirements (O'Donovan, 2020).

Although in our partner countries the development of quality assurance frameworks/systems for youth work is uneven, we have summarised the current trends and key aspects of quality in the context of youth work. Box 3 presents an overview of our findings.

Box 3: Youth work and quality assurance in project partner countries

The following outlines the main features of youth work in the project partner countries and current arrangements for quality assurance and project evaluation.

The **Belgium (French-speaking community)** defines youth work as "…covering a wide range of social, cultural, educative, environmental and/or political activities by, with and for young people, in groups or individually." It is based on informal and nonformal education. Youth workers may either be paid or volunteers.
Youth associations are recognised and funded by the Minister of Youth in BE(FR) under Decree 20-07-2000. Only recognised (and controlled) youth centres with a qualified coordinator may receive funding. The coordinator's qualification depends on their technical skills but also on practice, including skills and competences developed through peer learning in the youth centre. Coordinators may also participate in appropriate training to get a diploma for youth centres' management (Brevet d'Aptitudes de Gestion d'organismes culturels et socioculturels). Each youth organisation is required to send its yearly budget and financial statement to the BE (FR) Youth Department, where it is analysed. Inspectors have regular contacts recognised organisations (or those for which

recognition is pending). In addition to financial review, inspectors may provide pedagogical support.

In **France,** youth work is part of the "facilitation", sector, which since 1980 has been designated as **"…** an occupational sector with its own system of certifications and qualifications. Its role as a sector that serves social, cultural, educational and leisure interests was then clear." The facilitation sector supports individual and collective development and social inclusion, and/or promotion of community cultural life.
The national, local and regional authorities, non-formal education federations and associations, and professional facilitation sectors each play specific roles in the governance of youth work. National authorities may develop policies and regulations and establish qualifications for facilitators. Strategies on activities for youth are also developed at this level. Local authorities, including regional and departmental councils and communes may also develop initiatives for youth.
Quality assurance is not well developed in France. Existing evaluations are mostly top-down and focused on observable outcomes. Regional government offices attached to the central Youth and Sports and Health and Social Care offices, accredit and evaluate procedures and conditions of organisations supporting youth work. Other evaluations are primarily done through staff reports focusing on quantitative indicators such as numbers of: participants in activities, activity hours, paid staff, volunteers, as well as gender balance, opening hours etc.

Italy launched a public youth policy in the 1980s to encourage the development of secular youth organisations supporting ideological and religious pluralism. This "'secular' vision of associate life and social engagement" is, in principle, has been widely accepted. Nevertheless, there is no formal definition of youth work as a form of professional or voluntary work, nor are training opportunities for youth workers linked to any public accreditation or recognition framework. While most legislative and policy activities for youth work falls under the competences of regional administrations, a national framework law for recognition of youth work, which would set out principles and guidelines, is also currently under discussion.
Because youth work is not formally recognised in Italy, there is no national mechanism for quality assurance**.**
The Erasmus+ Italian Youth Agency, however, has developed a mechanisms to assess the quality of youth work in the implementation of related project. The national association of youth workers in Italy (NINFEA), which is recognised by the Ministry of Economic Development, is also developing a mechanism to check professional profiles of associated youth works and assure the quality of work delivered.

In **Romania**, youth work has largely been shaped through European funding programmes and initiatives, as the country does not have a deep history in this sector. At the national level, youth work is defined Youth Law (no. 350/2006) and through the 2012 National Occupational Standard which sets out the role of youth workers working in an organisation delivering activities and services, including guidance and support for young

people, integration and individual development, with the aim of enhancing diversity and promoting active citizenship, and so on. All activities are to take place in a non-governmental, governmental, local or central organisation with responsibilities in the field of youth work.
While there is no governmental authority directly responsible for youth work, and no national policy or strategy. Different national ministries support selected elements. The Ministry of Education supports validation of learning including the recognition of non-formal education learning; the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity supports the general framework on youth policies, and measures related to social inclusion, social justice; the National Agency for Community Programmes in the Field of Education and Vocational Training is focused on youth workers' training (through national initiatives and international training activities).

Sources: https://national-policies.eacea.ec.europa.eu/youthwiki/ ; Ord, J., Carletti, M., Cooper, S., Dansac, C., Morciano, D., Siurala, L. and Taru, M. (2018). *The Impact of Youth Work in Europe: A Study of Five European Countries***.** Humak University of Applied Sciences Publications, 56.

Findings discussed in Box 2 suggest the diversity of understandings and lived experiences within the youth work practice may shape in turn the understanding of quality assurance in NFE. Across Europe and Council of Europe Member States, QA standards and frameworks are implemented from very local/organisational approaches to national-level frameworks for youth work, and take a variety of forms: "from certification of training providers, through evaluation of youth organisations, to national quality marks or occupational standards and include: certification of providers and youth workers, evaluation of youth workers, evaluation of youth organisations, national standards, and funding requirements."(O'Donovan et al., 2020, p.51).

3.5. *What are the main approaches and tools used for ensuring the quality of NFE and youth work activities?*

This section discusses our findings about main approaches and tools for ensuring quality of NFE and youth work activities, as well as some key gaps we identified in our analysis. As seen in the previous section, one of the key components of a quality assurance system in NFE and youth work is implementing an evaluation process. Based on the literature reviewed (European Commission, 2015; Fennes & Otten, 2008; Gretschel et al., 2023; Latchem, 2012), we may summarise key features for evaluation in NFE and youth work which should be taken into consideration as:

1. the core principles of NFE and youth work,
2. an alignment with the objectives and expected outcomes of the project/activities,
3. a thorough documentation of each step undertaken,
4. the development of indicators to collect information,
5. an analysis based on data collected throughout the project/activity life,
6. using the analysis for the improvement of methods, competences, etc.
7. sharing the results with all stakeholders concerned.

We view the evaluation process as an ongoing cycle rather than as a linear one, where improvements are introduced throughout the project life, and not only after the project has ended. Also, we identified a list of key principles for evaluation in NFE and youth work based on the literature consulted:

- Generally, evaluation has three main purposes: for accountability, to gain new knowledge and to improve agency capability (Cooper, 2014; Hatzfeld, 2014). While accountability to funders is considered “a structural driver of evaluation” (Gready, 2009), it’s important to understand how the results of an evaluation can “re-orientate professional activities and relationships and redirect resources in a fundamental way” (Ibid).
- Evaluation is influenced by the political, organisational, and sociocultural context in which it is conducted (Archibald, 2015; Cahill & Dadvand, 2018; de St Croix & Doherty, 2022).
- Even if NFE and youth work aim at ensuring a participatory approach, projects may inadvertently replicate patterns of power and privilege and have “a lack of critique of taken-for-granted assumptions about voice, participation, agency and empowerment” (Cahill & Dadvand, 2018).
- Evaluation will feed back into, and it will reshape, context and practice (Archibald, 2015; Gready, 2009).
- An informed approach to the strengths and weaknesses of different types of evaluation may help to avoid “the rush to provide gold standards of success or impact” (Gready, 2009).
- There are many models and types of evaluation (Baughman et al., 2012). One of the most used is the logic model, which is supposed to help establish a direct relationship between inputs and outcomes. According to research (de St Croix & Doherty, 2022; Fusco, 2012), unexpected outcomes – what is not captured within this model – call for a *relational* rather than logical approach to evaluation (Fusco, 2012; Slovenko & Thompson, 2016).

Organisational or process evaluation is concerned about effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability, whereas outcome or practice evaluation focuses on improvement through reflective and participatory practices (Smart, 2007). Through our research we identified a number of approaches and tools used for both types of evaluation in NFE and youth work organisations (see Table 1).

Table 1: Approaches and tools used for organisational and project evaluation in NFE and youth work organisations

Approach/Tool	**Short Description**
Participatory action research (PAR)	PAR is an approach to research committed to sharing power and resources in order to work towards beneficial outcomes for all participants, guided by principles of reciprocity and reflexivity (Sallah et al., 2018). According to McIntyre (2007), the four underlining tenets specific to the field of PAR are the following: 1. A collective commitment to investigate an issue or problem. 2. A desire to engage in self and collective reflection to gain clarity about the issue under investigation. 3. A joint decision to engage in individual and/or collective action that leads to a useful solution that benefits the people involved 4. The building of alliances between researchers and participants in the planning, implementation, and dissemination of the research process (McIntyre, 2007, p.1). This approach is different from the "conventional model of pure research where the researched are treated as passive subjects and subjected to the 'elitist model' and where the researcher is the expert and knows it all" (Sallah et al., 2018, p.405).
Self- and peer-assessment	Self- and peer-assessment quality assessment (SPAM) model, Finland. The SPAM model is based on three principles: "1) the activity (Youth Centre, Youth Camp, Group activity and so on) is prepared well beforehand. The youth workers and the young people to be reviewed are told about the purpose and nature of the visit and they are encouraged to co-operate with the assessment team. Among other things, it is explained that the objective of the review is to develop the activity; 2). Each team spends about 2 to 4 hours at the location observing the place and the social interaction, mingling with people, discussing with them; and 3) The morning after there is 3 to 4 hour feed-back session, which provides another opportunity for the reviewers to check their findings." (Nöjd & Siurala, 2017). The SPAM is an ongoing process, so that most of the activities and facilities have been assessed at least twice over an extended period of time. The SPAM has a list of 24 quality indicators,

	that is rather “a general frame for observations and questions”. The Finnish SPAM is “based on the idea that youth workers (from other Youth Centres, for example, or Youth Centres from other Cities) assess other youth workers and their work with the young people.” Young people can join evaluation teams. The presence of youth workers and young people as equals facilitate reciprocal communication in assessments contexts (Nöjd & Siurala, 2017).
Logbooks	In Sweden, KEKS’ web-based system and log book “creates a unified model for documenting the daily activities in recreation centres, youth houses and other open youth work projects and activities” (O’Donovan, 2020). The log book is used to improve the quality of youth work practice, the communications between member organisations and youth workers, and the promotion of reflective practice (O’Donovan, 2020). In Luxembourg, log books are an administrative tool that “can also be seen as a way of developing organisational, group or corporate memory…through recording and documenting shared experiences both positive and negative, mutual learning, and good practice over time” (O’Donovan, 2020). Log books can help small and voluntary groups to create corporate memory, identity and purpose (Ibid).
Most significant change (MSC)	The MSC is “an on-going practice, rather than a ‘one-off’ evaluative process and hence it is shaped by those who use it as they learn from its use” (Cooper, 2014). The MSC technique involves: 1) the generation of a number of participants’ “significant change” stories during a given time period and the systematic collective analysis of the stories; 2) establishing a dialogue between the “evaluators” (e.g., the youth workers) and the community members (the young people). The MSC technique focuses on learning rather than accountability and increases involvement of youth workers in evaluation (ibid).
Storytelling	Storytelling workshops “were designed to communicate the impact and importance of youth work through a process of

workshops	collective reflection on practice" (de St Croix, 2022). As a method is "collaborative and dialogical, encourage critical reflection, develop practice, inform others about the process and impact of youth work, and resist the simplification of practice and its separation from a wider social context" (Ibid). Initially developed by In Defence of Youth Work (de St Croix, 2018), the methodology involves a group of around ten people for approximately three hours with a facilitator: "The facilitator invites real life 'stories' from the youth workers' or young people's experience, responding to a 'prompt' question such as 'what is the special impact that youth work has on young people's lives?' The group selects one story to hear in more detail, after which the facilitator and group members ask questions to enable the story-teller to 'unpick' elements of the story. Critical reflection is encouraged from the story-teller and group members on key processes, workers' interventions, dilemmas and uncertainties, possible outcomes, 'unfinished' elements, and in what ways the practice does (or does not) reflect the 'cornerstones' of youth work. The worker may then be supported to write up their story" (de St Croix, 2018).
Transformative Evaluation	Transformative Evaluation is seen "as an alternative approach to evaluating youth work to address the lack of 'evidence' available to demonstrate its value in an environment of reducing public resources" (Morciano et al., 2019). Youth workers have a central and active role, they are positioned as the 'evaluators', not simply as data collectors (Ibid). It's based on the MSC technique (see above) and the design, implementation and learning processes are intertwined. The process follows a four-stage process (Morciano et al., 2019): 1. Story generation - this involves youth workers generating significant change stories with young people. 2. Youth Workers Analysis and selection - the youth workers collectively analyse the young people's stories, using content analysis to group stories. The youth workers add their professional commentary to the stories they generated with young people and select one story from each group to forward to stage 3. 3. Stakeholder Group selection and feedback -The Stakeholders Group receive the selected stories from the youth workers group. They discuss, review, and select the one that they feel represents the most significant change for that cycle. The cycle is completed by the return of this story to the youth workers' group together with their collective reason

	for selecting particular story. While the Transformative Evaluation approach is driven by youth workers and young participants at its first stages, there is the intervention of external actors (such as researchers and other stakeholders in the Stakeholder Group).
Multistakeholder evaluation	In an example from Belgium FR (Devries & Rossion, 2017), the evaluation of the pilot project "Vers une politique locale de jeunesse plus participative" was conducted from a multistakeholder approach. The stakeholders involved were the Minister's Cabinet (Ministry of Youth of the Walloon-Brussels Federation); the Observatory for Children, Youth and Youth Aid; Creccide asbl (a NGO); and the municipalities involved in the implementation of the project. The evaluation was organized into four parts, including technical implementation of the project; evaluation of local dynamics and guidelines implemented within the project framework; local issues regarding youth local policy; and youth participation. Each part included different data collection methods, such as satisfaction surveys (online), self-assessments, document analysis, case studies, etc.
Competence-based evaluation	CISV International developed and evaluation tool - the Programme Directors Planning and Evaluation Form (PDPEF) - to facilitate the planning, monitoring, and evaluation of their educational content and methods. The PDPEF was designed to be used before, during and at the end of a programme to assist in: planning the delivery of educational content; monitoring the progress towards identified educational goals; evaluating the quality of the learning curriculum based upon the achievement of these goals by the cohort of participants (Friesenhahn et al., 2014). Using a competence-based approach, each CISV programme picks four core competences, described as goals, and each goal is supported by a set of indicators which identify key attitudes, skills, and knowledge. In the planning phase, programme leaders also determine the evidence they will use and collect throughout the programme (e.g. observations, discussions, photographs or videos, participation, surveys or questionnaires, crafts, or journals). Monitoring the progress of the goals and indicators provides programme leaders with information that informs any need to adjust the educational content; leaders and volunteers can adapt and adjust the learning curriculum. At the end of each programme, the programme director provides a final evaluation of the programme goals and indicators by completing the Group Evaluation section of the PDPEF where they

	indicate whether or not a participant has demonstrated any evidence of success with each of the goals and indicators. At the end of each year's programme cycle, the Evaluation and Research Committee (EVR) collates the data and provides each programme with a summary report. Then the data is assessed by the educational and programme committees to determine actions which can be taken to improve a given goal or indicator (based on a scoring rubric) (Friesenhahn et al., 2014).
Photovoice	Photovoice "is a process by which people can identify, represent, and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique" (Wang & Burris, 1997, p.171). Used in youth work for project evaluation purposes (Aquino, 2019), photovoice "provides participants an opportunity to take photographs that address a salient community concern and present them in group discussion that empowers them to reflect on personal and community strengths, create critical dialogue, share knowledge about personal and community issues, and develop and host a forum for the presentation of their lived experiences and priorities through self-identified images, language, and context" (Hergenrather et al., 2009). The steps to conduct a photovoice evaluation include: the identification of the community issues(s) of importance, participant recruitment, photovoice training, camera distribution and instruction, identification of photo assignments, discussion of photo assignments, data analysis, a community forum for policy makers and influential advocates, development of action plans, and evaluation of program and policy changes (Hergenrather et al., 2009).
Online self-assessment tools	The Erasmus+ project TWOST (Training without stereotypes) developed an online self-assessment tool, in order to allow organizations to test themselves on gender friendliness, awareness, and equality inside their organizations. It's a 3-step process: • Self-assessment tool: Organisation fills the form based on its own characteristics. • Quality label: Based on the responses, the organisation acquires bronze, silver or gold quality label. • Database: A personalised database will be elaborated for areas of improvement. The TWOST Online self-assessment tool aims to support youth workers and organizations to: • Develop competence and awareness on gender stereotyping and gender-based violence and harassment in their everyday work.

	• Engage more actively in reflecting on their pedagogical practice in terms of gender approach, stimulated by a structured self-assessment exercise providing feedback according to different levels of progression. • Self-direct their learning and develop their competence whenever they want, at their own pace, extending professional development opportunities to informal online learning environments. • Establish a personal competence profile. • Access a tailored ecosystem of European and national training resources to further develop their competencies according to need or interest. • Receive a quality label, which will prove that organization has a certain level of gender equality inside the organization.
Intersectionality Resource Guide and Toolkit (UN Women)	Although the focus of this resource guide and toolkit is not youth work or NFE, we include it in our list as it directly addresses how to introduce an intersectional approach to project management and evaluation. The Resource Guide and Toolkit is comprised of eight enablers and a framework for action that helps the user to reflect and identify actions that can be taken to address intersectionality. It was the result of an interagency joint project between UN Women, UN DESA, UNICEF, UNFPA and OHCHR, among others.

Other more “traditional” tools used in process and outcome evaluations include interviews, focus groups, surveys, and online consultations (de St Croix & Doherty, 2022; Dickson et al., 2013b; Kloosterman & Giebel, 2007). An essential aspect of evaluation in NFE and youth work is the active participation of young people; research has pointed to the benefits of including them in evaluation processes:

- empowering and enhancing autonomy of youth participants (Bulanda et al., 2013);
- producing trustworthy information for funders, communities, and young participants themselves (Checkoway & Richards-Schuster, 2004);
- paving the way for a rights-based approach to evaluation by consolidating “the right to participate; strengthening the validity and relevance of the evaluation; leveraging young people’s capacity and skills; and building evaluation capital and investing in current and future leaders” (Purdue et al., 2018).

Notwithstanding the progress made towards higher quality NFE and youth work, research has identified a number of critical points in relation to the ways in which quality assurance and evaluation processes are used. A first critical point highlighted in the literature is the emphasis placed on accountability and outcomes-based measurement in NFE and youth work (de St Croix, 2018; de St Croix & Doherty, 2022; Haylock & Miller, 2016; Morciano, 2015; Morciano et al., 2019; Ord et al., 2018; Smart, 2007; Sonneveld et al., 2020). As Williamson (2020) argues, “if youth work becomes too heavily preoccupied with outcomes and impact, at the expense of process factors, then it will cease to be youth work” (Williamson, 2020, p.18). However, the NFE and youth work organisations depend greatly on external funding to fulfil their mission, and often a key requirement from funders is to have some accountability mechanism in place in order to ‘prove’ its efficacy, efficiency, sustainability, and impact. According to research, this emphasis on accountability is an expression of an increasing ‘managerialisation’ of social services and, by extension, of NFE and youth work (Bradford, 2000; de St Croix, 2018, 2022; Lavie-Ajayi & Krumer-Nevo, 2013).

One of the key issues is that, in NFE and youth work, defining indicators for specific outcomes is a complex task; as argued by Lowe (2013), “the discussion about outcome measurement largely avoids a crucial point about the nature of measuring impact. The meaning of any ‘outcome’—the actual impact on the life of the person experiencing it—is heavily dependent on the particular context of that individual or group” (Lowe, 2013, p. 213). Therefore, several authors call for more “reflexive” or “democratic” accountability mechanisms that acknowledge the diversity of practices, perspectives, and experiences of people involved in NFE and youth work (Bradford, 2000; de St Croix, 2022). St Croix (2022) suggests that democratic accountability “centres the participation of those who are most affected by decisions” and in the case of youth work “democratic evaluation and monitoring values the expertise of young people, practitioners, family and community, rather than the political or pragmatic interests of resource holders” (de St Croix, 2022, p. 702).

A second critical point we identified in the literature is that youth work and NFE need an approach to evaluation that it's fit for purpose. While collecting information (i.e. data, evidence, etc.) to substantiate the impact of NFE and youth work is key, not all information is seen as reliable knowledge. There is often a confusion around what is considered 'valid' or 'reliable' knowledge when it comes to demonstrating the contribution of NFE and youth work (Archibald, 2015; Slovenko & Thompson, 2016). Several authors criticise the use of specific methods (in particular, of quantitative nature) to produce 'scientific evidence' about the impact of NFE and youth work (Archibald, 2015; de St Croix, 2018, 2022; Doherty & de St Croix, 2019; Duffy, 2017; Morciano, 2015). While we recognise the need to illustrate the results and impact made by NFE and youth work organisations with trustworthy data in order to improve recognition of their practice, we advocate for an approach to evaluation that acknowledges that 'valid knowledge' also includes diverse voices, and in particular, those who've been systematically marginalised. As noted by Nöjd and Siurala (2017), issues related to standard evaluation processes can be dealt with "through being more sensitive to closeness to practice, to a learner-oriented approach, to learning as a collective effort, to reciprocal dialogue, to the contextualized nature of knowledge and to the Deweyan notion that 'knowing is a process of intervention'" (Nöjd & Siurala, 2017, p. 10).

A third critical point is related to the 'deficit narrative' or 'deficit-based language' used to build narratives about the impact of youth work (Corney et al., 2022; Coussée et al., 2009; de St Croix, 2018; Lavie-Ajayi & Krumer-Nevo, 2013). This is particularly problematic when conducting evaluation processes (and the subsequent reporting) because it positions young people as 'lacking' or 'deviant' (Coussée et al., 2009; de St Croix, 2018), and in particular young people that are systematically marginalised. The risk of using this type of narrative (e.g. young people labelled "at risk", "underprivileged", "problematic", "troublesome", etc.) is to "pathologise" young people and therefore, negatively impact their motivation to participate by generating a disempowering effect (Corney et al., 2022). Also, by giving space to such narrative might shift the focus to risk prevention or addressing anti-social behaviour rather than to provide spaces for inclusion of all young people (Coussée et al., 2009; Howard et al., 2020).

4. Conclusions

This report identified a small number of sources from academic and grey literature that address how human rights and intersectionality-based approaches may be used in programme evaluation. These approaches recognise the importance of acknowledging individual participants and youth workers as complex individuals with multiple identities, backgrounds, and lived experiences. NFE and youth work activities take place in unique contexts influenced by a myriad of factors (e.g. political, social, economic, environmental, etc.), and evaluation methods need to support youth organisations in capturing this.

In section III we discussed the main approaches to quality assurance in non-formal education and youth work, including methods and tools used for ensuring the quality of NFE and youth work activities. The literature highlights the importance of keeping a holistic approach in quality assurance, and in particular, in evaluation of processes and outcomes.

We argue that by introducing an intersectional and human rights-based approach to quality assurance and evaluation we can address the critical points discussed in section III. First, this approach would help us build democratic accountability mechanisms, developed by and for young people, acknowledging the diversity of context, practices, and experiences. Second, introducing an intersectional and human rights-based approach to evaluation would allow us to identify and remedy asymmetries of power and privilege while collecting, analysing, and reporting data. It would mean taking *a critical perspective* towards research, summarised in the following four assumptions:

> (a) Research fundamentally involves issues of *power*;
>
> (b) the research report is not transparent, but rather it is *authored* by a raced, gendered, classed, and politically oriented individual;
>
> (c) race, class, and gender [among other social identities] are crucial for understanding experience; and
>
> (d) historically, *traditional research has silenced* members of oppressed and marginalized groups (Marshall & Rossman, 2014, p.74).

Finally, introducing an intersectional and human rights-based approach to quality assurance and evaluation would help us ‘invert the narrative’ and move from a deficit-based language in youth work to an actually empowering narrative that speaks to young people and their reality. Instead of seeking to “formalise non-formal education” (Morciano, 2015) we want to develop quality assurance and evaluation tools that are designed by those who will use them as they learn from their use.

One of the core principles of our project is that evaluation should serve youth work organisations to put into place accountability mechanisms adapted to the needs and realities of their practice, while allowing them to gain new knowledge and to improve their perceived agency as key actors in education.

Doherty and St Croix (2019) propose the following questions to start thinking about a more equitable evaluation in youth work:

1. Does evaluation suit the setting?
2. Does evaluation reinforce or challenge unequal power relations?
3. Does evaluation capture and value both the everyday and the remarkable elements of practice? (Doherty & de St Croix, 2019, n.a.)

We see these questions as a starting point in the development of a quality assurance model for NFE and youth work, including tools that can be used for organisational and project evaluation. We also take into consideration the existing frameworks and models discussed in section III. Our findings point first to the importance of including stakeholders (i.e. youth workers, staff, funders, and young participants) throughout the design, implementation, and evaluation phases of NFE and youth work activities. Second, even though the literature underlines that balancing needs of individual groups and the whole is challenging, we recognise this as an important step in quality assurance. Third, by introducing a human rights and intersectionality-based 'filter', we are able to consider important policy questions surrounding quality assurance, as well as engaging with stakeholders in implementation processes and evaluation. Finally, the findings from our research confirm the need to take context into account as a key factor, so as to provide guidelines rather than prescribing a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to quality assurance and evaluation.

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6. Annexes

Annex 1 - Key concepts/key words for literature search:

- Quality assurance (QA) + non-formal education (NFE)
- Quality assurance + youth work + Europe
- evaluation + NFE
- evaluation + youth work
- Monitoring and evaluation + NFE
- Monitoring and evaluation + youth work
- Evaluation + quality assurance + youth work
- Impact + youth work + NFE
- Intersectionality + rights + NFE
- NFE + intersectionality + human rights + common EU values
- NFE + social identity/ies + human rights + common EU values
- potential bias in evaluation
- agency + evaluation

Annex 2: Quality criteria and standards in education and training activities of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe

This quality assurance model developed by the Youth Department of the Council of Europe integrates the feedback collected by the YD in 2014-2015 among youth organisations. The quality standards presented in the report are applicable to the activities of the YD - and by extension, to other youth organisations working in cooperation with the YD. Below we provide the indicators for criterion 7 ("An integrated approach to intercultural learning, participation, and human rights education") and 11 ("A thorough and open process of evaluation") which are relevant for the QA for All project.

Criterion 7: An integrated approach to intercultural learning, participation and human rights education

The education and training activities of the YD are marked by the ethical and education standards of the Council of Europe as applied to youth work and non-formal education. This is commonly translated into three approaches that must be combined and articulated in each given activity according to its specificities: intercultural learning, participation and human rights education.

Intercultural learning enables the understanding of the impact of stereotyping, prejudice and ethnocentrism on the relations with and between people from diverse cultural backgrounds. In educational practice, intercultural learning should be part of the formal programme (in an explicit or implicit manner) and inform the overall methodology of the activities. Intercultural learning should enable everyone to contribute to and benefit from the activity regardless of, and in the respect of, their cultural backgrounds and identity affiliations.

Participation is central to all youth activities. In educational processes it also entails that young people consciously take part in making decisions about their learning, and that

everyone is equally treated and included in the activity, and that measures or methods are adopted to facilitate everyone's active participation.
Human rights education is a fundamental human right itself, and in the work of the YD includes three dimensions – learning about, through and for human rights. Human rights education should be mainstreamed in all activities. This includes adopting human rights-based approaches to the analysis of the issues; favouring awareness of the human rights standards of the Council of Europe and adopting educational approaches and methods that support learning through human rights.
7.1. Activities must have a minimum duration of four full working days 7.2. The teams of trainers and facilitators must have a multicultural composition, reflecting the linguistic, social and cultural realities of the group of participants
7.3. An optimal usage of the resources for interpretation and translation must be sought 7.4. Training activities should in principle be bi-lingual and every effort should be made to cater for the linguistic needs of all participants
7.5. Preparatory documents (and other essential educational resources, such as lecturers) should be provided in the working languages of the activity
7.6. The trainers and facilitators should be aware of their own cultural biases and be able to reflect on them with participants
7.7. The usage of educational concepts and references from more than one national reference or origin should be promoted
7.8. All working languages of the activity should be represented in education team 7.9. The trainers and organisers must adhere strictly to the principles of human rights, their implications in a European training activity and be familiar with the concepts and practice of human rights education and the respective standards and resources of the Council of Europe
7.10. The trainers must be able and committed to address cases of prejudice that may occur 7.11. The trainers and organisers should be aware of the existence and functioning of discrimination and its possible expression among the participants and how to deal with it; they should consistently value and take into account perspectives and points of view of minority or under-represented groups, participants' access needs (e.g. related to disabilities or to faith or religious beliefs) and show a commitment to gender equality
7.12. The programme should foster the direct participation and involvement of everyone and make use of the participants' experiences and realities
7.13. The team of trainers must be able to engage in conflict transformation with participants in the strict observance of human rights principles
7.14. The activities must be designed so as to offer participants a valuable intercultural learning experience (including participants learning to take a distance from their social roles, developing empathy and tolerance of ambiguity, acting in the spirit of human rights values, questioning ethnocentric views and developing multiperspectivity.

Criterion 11. A planned and open process of evaluation
An adequate evaluation of the activities is crucial to secure, among others, stock-taking of the results, the evaluation of the quality of the learning process and the follow-up to be given. Evaluation of objectives and results should take into account that the impact and

outcomes of an educational activity can often be assessed only on a long-term perspective.

11.1. All activities must be the object of a specific evaluation meeting which should be held at earliest 6 weeks after the activity and six months at the latest, with the exception of study sessions where an evaluation meeting may be held right at the end of the activity

11.2. In the specific case of field activities, an evaluation meeting may be held right after the end of the activity; this should not prejudge the need for other post-course or medium-term impact evaluations

11.3. The needs of evaluation should be addressed during the first preparatory meeting

11.4. The evaluation should take into account the perspectives of the participants, trainers and organisers and, in as far as possible, it should include recorded data and information and make use of qualitative and quantitative criteria; participants should have the possibility to express their opinion freely in a safe and secure space

11.5. The evaluation reports and their main conclusions should be made available to all YD staff and to the activity's participants, in the respect of confidentiality of personal data

11.6. The evaluation meetings should consider also ways to support the participants and follow-up the activity within the Council of Europe and by the partners.

Annex 3: Proposed standards for quality in the youth field (Fennes & Otten, 2008)

Fennes and Otten (2008) expanded their analysis of quality in NFE towards elaborating quality criteria and standards specific to the youth field. Below we provide the full list of quality standards proposed by the authors for the youth sector:

1. The activity is underpinned by the core principles and practices of nonformal education.

The activity is conceptualised and designed to meet needs which are identified through an adequate and ongoing needs analysis at all levels meeting the following criteria:

- have a declared value position of those performing the needs analysis;
- have a defined scope;
- be systematically based on available information on knowledge about the issue to be addressed, including from research, practice and stakeholders;
- take into account both latent and manifest needs;
- include a description of the results, their interpretation and a recommendation on the action to be taken;
- be accessible and transparent concerning its results to relevant stakeholders.

2. The activity is consciously conceptualised and framed to meet identified and appropriate objectives as well as to allow for unexpected outcomes. This is related to the following aspects: Definition of social and educational objectives; participant profile and composition of the group of participants; activity format and architecture; pedagogical approach.
3. The activity is well designed, planned and carried out, in both educational and organisational terms. This refers to the management of the activity, information of and communication with applicants, participants and other relevant actors, roles and relations of all actors, recruitment and composition of the educational/trainers team, preparation and implementation of the educational programme.

4. The activity is adequately resourced. This refers to human, educational, financial, infrastructure, technical and environmental resources (trainers, experts, managers, administrators, technicians, training/learning facilities and equipment (including for CSCL), accommodation, food, equipment, services, materials, communication tools, location and surrounding, social and cultural environment etc.).
5. The activity demonstrably uses its resources effectively and efficiently. An activity that demonstrably uses its resources effectively and efficiently: is designed and implemented in a way that its aims and objectives are achieved effectively and efficiently, including with respect to the use of time, human and material resources (cost-benefit considerations); calculates the budget of an activity according to an appropriate benchmark for cost/participant/day; such benchmarks will vary depending on the country and on standards for comparable activities; makes every effort to seek out and draw on all potential direct and indirect resources available in an effective and efficient way; be evaluated with respect to its outcomes, results and impact in relation to its aims and objectives; provide an account of efficient and effective use of resources that shows the activity's contribution to the outcomes and benefits of the activity.
6. The activity is monitored and evaluated. Monitoring is used as an ongoing instrument to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the activity during the process of preparation and implementation as well as to prevent failures. Monitoring is an ongoing task with respect to: the preparation, implementation, evaluation and follow-up of the activity according to established work plans, deadlines, benchmarks, responsibilities, budgets etc.; the implementation of the pedagogical approach, programme, methodology and methods; the achievement of (interim) objectives, outcomes and results.
7. The activity acknowledges and makes visible its outcomes and results. The outcomes and results of the activity are documented and made accessible to all actors involved, to sponsors and funding institutions, to interested researchers and (optionally) to policy makers. If relevant, outcomes and results are published and disseminated to a larger public. Participants receive a certificate for their participation in the activity, including the description of the programme, achievements and other relevant aspects of the activity. Participants are encouraged to apply what they have learned and to develop and implement follow-up activities. Participants are offered to be informed and contacted by the training provider with a view to follow-up activities.
8. The activity integrates principles and practices of intercultural learning. The activity is designed and implemented in a way that participants are encouraged and supported in relating to and interacting with participants from other cultural backgrounds; are encouraged to explore the socio-cultural environment of the location where the activity takes place; experience cultural differences and learn from them; develop appreciation for cultural diversity; develop empathy and an understanding for other cultures; develop a positive attitude towards human rights and against, racism, antisemitism, xenophobia and intolerance; develop intercultural competence.

9. The activity contributes to European-level policy aims and objectives in the youth field. The objectives of the activity reflect or include European-level policy aims and objectives in the youth field (see chapter “Youth work in a European context”). The design and implementation of the activity is coherent with the values and principles reflected in European-level policy aims and objectives in the youth field. The activity is evaluated with respect to the achievement of these and related policy aims and objectives. Relevant outcomes and results of the activity, including follow-up activities, are publicised to an interested larger public and, in particular, to youth policy makers at all levels and to youth research.

Annex 4: Regional and country level examples of quality assurance systems and/or frameworks

The report from the Expert Group on Youth Work Quality Systems (European Commission, 2015) offers examples of quality assurance frameworks and systems at the regional and national level. Below we provide a summary of these frameworks and systems as described in the report from the Expert Group, as well as an example from Ireland presented by O’Donovan (2020).

Regional examples:

Country	QA framework/system
Finland	**Youth Work Quality Assessment – youth centres (European Commission, 2015):** In Finland the youth centres are often run by the youth services of the municipalities. In order to evaluate and develop the work of youth centres and other youth activities in the capital area, the youth services of three cities developed a set of Youth Work Quality Assessment tools. The assessment criteria for peer evaluation and self-evaluation exist for five activity forms: • Open activities for young people at the youth centres. • Small group activities. • Camping activities. • Online-based youth work. • Online game activities. There are many ways to document the local youth work at youth centres. Widely used tools are quantitative data gathering of visitors, surveys of young people, and reporting of projects. The self- and peer assessments of open activities at the youth centres are widely used across Finland. The same set of criteria is suitable for both assessment forms. The assessment criteria guide the observation. The three areas of assessment are the actions of work community, the actions of young people, and resources. There are 42 criteria, and each criterion is evaluated from level 1 to level 4.
Sweden	**Quality circle for the development of local youth work (European Commission, 2015).** KEKS is a network of 41 local departments for youth work in Sweden. They

	use a "quality circle" to develop youth work; this is done both within the local departments and through benchmarking, peer learning, exchange of best practices and other forms of cooperation within KEKS. The system has five different tools centred on the core principles of participation and non-formal learning: • A digital logbook where all youth work is systematically documented through both statistics and written comments • An annual survey of young people visiting the youth centres. The survey consists of two parts: one with questions about the respondent (age/sex/background, etc.), and one with questions about safety, participation, accessibility, etc. • A group survey answered by young people who take part in creating activities for themselves and/or others, answering questions about how and to what extent they have participated. • ELD (Experience, Learning, Description) – a method for documenting and making visible non-formal learning. • A form for statistics and economic data regarding the number of visitors, number of activity hours, costs, etc. Each year the results from the surveys, statistics and economic data are compiled into key figures for every youth centre and municipality showing development over time, as well as in relation to other youth centres. The result is reported in five different areas: Target group, Safety and Treatment, Accessibility, Social needs (participation, influence, responsibility and learning) and Resource utilisation.

National examples

Country	QA framework/system
Estonia	In Estonia, national youth policy is developed by the Ministry of Education and Research and implemented by The Estonian Youth Work Centre (EYWC) administrated by the Ministry. Local level youth work and policy is responsibility of local municipalities. On the basis of the national level policy documents, every local municipality can work out a local youth work action plan; however, it is not mandatory for them. The quality standards, core principles and values for youth work are defined in the Youth Work Act (European Commission, 2015). High quality youth work in Estonia is considered to create conditions for young people aged 7-26 that • promote the diverse development of every young person;

	• enable them to be active outside their families, formal education and work; • involve young people in the decision-making process; • take into account needs and interests of young people; • base on the participation and free will of young people; • support the initiative of young people; • proceed from the principle of equal treatment, tolerance and partnership. However, the system does not function in the whole country and therefore it does not give a comprehensive picture of youth work quality in all local municipalities. Moreover, assessing youth work quality is voluntary for local municipalities.
Ireland	Steps to Inclusive Youth Work – National Youth Council of Ireland (O'Donovan, 2020) In Ireland, there are approximately 1,400 paid youth workers and some 40,000 volunteer youth workers. The voluntary youth sector is the main employer of youth workers in Ireland who determine necessary qualifications as well as pay and conditions. A National Quality Standards Framework for youth work (NQSF) was introduced in 2011 as a support tool to assess standards of youth work and evaluate development and improvement. The NQSF applies to all staff-led youth work organisations, services, projects and programmes which are funded under the Department for Children and Youth Affairs. In 2016, the National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI), the representative body for voluntary youth organisations, published a toolkit for the youth sector: 8 Steps to Inclusive Youth Work – Promoting best quality inclusive practice in youth work settings. The eight STEPS to Inclusive Youth Work are: • Step 1 Organisational Review. • Step 2 Policies and Group Contracts Policies. • Step 3 Space and Environment. • Step 4 Staff and Volunteers. • Step 5 Activities and Involvement of Young People. • Step 6 Resourcing Inclusion. • Step 7 Networking and Partnerships. • Step 8 Monitoring and Evaluation.

	Each step provides for examples of relevant sources of evidence; best practice indicators relating to the organisation and the young people they work with; practical examples of good practice from among the 16 voluntary youth organisations involved; further resources and supports; an action plan template for continuous improved planning; a logic model.
Luxembourg	The Youth Work Quality System Luxembourg is used only in professional work in youth centres. In these youth centres the youth workers manage/oversee different activities (participation, information, projects, open space, guidance) for young people. They are financed by the state of Luxemburg (Ministry of National Education, Childhood and Youth) and the concerned municipalities. Professional open youth work is governed by a legal framework and implementation rules (employees, remuneration, budgets, organisation, and standards, etc.) (European Commission, 2015). Quality is reflected in a circular system of self-evaluation: each youth centre develops a concept paper where it sets itself formal targets and defines indicators to prove their realisation; the youth centre's annual report states the results; the quality report comments on both concept paper and annual plan and triggers improvements and corrections to the concept paper (European Commission, 2015). The quality tools used in the Youth Work Quality System are: • “Journal de bord” Standardised quantitative operating figures. • Documented auto-evaluation. • Scientific evaluation: Qualitative evaluation of five preselected youth-centres by the research unit of the University of Luxembourg. The evaluation is commissioned by the Ministry of Education, Childhood and Youth. The youth centres receive personal feedback, the common trends are discussed in the national quality board. • Peer evaluation in guided working groups (city of Luxemburg): Local meetings of quality delegates of the youth centres. The meetings are animated by the local youth service.
The Netherlands	Youthwise is an instrument for coaching youth groups and interviewing collaboration partners (European Commission, 2015). Youthwise is a tool for professionals who work with teenagers and young people as a coach, youth worker or social worker. It encourages the development of young people, contributes to the professionalisation of youth work and makes the results visible. Youthwise is easily accessible and can be used for a variety of target

	groups, methods and organisations. The working method is based on the learning cycle 'plan – do – check'. The reports that Youthwise produces give valuable insights into the target groups issues, goals and successes. Youthwise enables youth workers to report their results to the local governments. And that is essential for making good youth policy. Youthwise is a web-based system that works on PC/laptop, tablets and smart phones. The user has a personal and secure (shielded) homepage from where lists can be created, viewed and archived. The professional and management executives can monitor the progress via the inbox. Youthwise contains three modules. The modules provide a coherent system that provides professionals with information that is important in the guidance of young people. The modules are: 1) Personal development plan that describes individual young people's goals and actions; 2) Development plan for groups of young people with goals and actions; and 3) Questionnaire for external partners / chain partners. Youthwise has been developed by DSP-groep as part of a nationwide programme Welfare New Style and in collaboration with eight youth care institutions in Amsterdam and several departments of the City of Amsterdam (European Commission, 2015).