



**DEVELOPING
DETACHED
YOUTH
WORK
IN
MALTA
AND
ROMANIA**

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The Erasmus+ project on Detached Youth Work arose as a result of a number of inter-related factors.

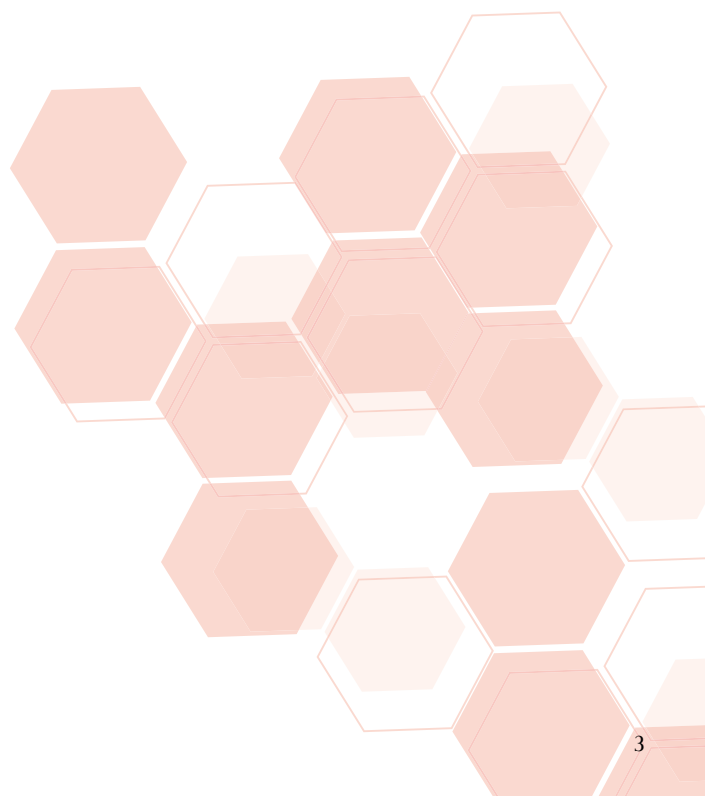
Key Action 2 of the Erasmus+ programme supports strategic partnerships in the field of education, training and youth with a view to promoting cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices. In opening the door to strategic partnerships, Erasmus+ greatly enhances the possibilities for developing innovative youth work practices and for sharing experiences across Europe.

The project also reflected the ambitions and aspirations of the partner organisations. In the case of Aġenzija Żgħażaġh, which initiated and coordinated the project, it served to expand and strengthen the services it provides for young people in Malta, while also fulfilling a commitment in the national youth policy, "Towards 2020 - A shared vision for the future of young people" to provide "outreach and detached youth work services to address, in particular, the needs of socially excluded and at risk young people".

All the partner organisations involved in the project were committed to the concept of detached youth work and the benefits that could accrue to young people, youth organisations and society in general if it were practically and effectively implemented 'on the ground'. Detached youth work was new territory for both Aġenzija Żgħażaġh and the Centre for Sustainable Community Development (CSCD), Romania, but the YMCA George Williams College and Stichting Jong Rotterdam had relevant experience in the field. This combination of experience and inexperience proved both fruitful and challenging and the outcomes of the project will, I believe, greatly benefit not only the partner organisations and the young people with whom they work, but also help promote detached youth work practice as a valuable and important, if demanding, aspect of youth work.

I would like to thank all the partner organisations for their enthusiasm and commitment to the project and Brian Belton, in particular, for his expertise and for writing this report.

Miriam Teuma
Chief Executive Officer
Aġenzija Żgħażaġh



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Over the last two years research, practice, training, analysis and development have brought us to the point of evaluation.

The aim of the project has been to build the project partners expertise in the field of detached youth work, share good practice and to develop quality assurance tools that are suitable for this particular youth work approach at different levels, including service delivery, supervision of staff and management.

While the nature of detached and outreach youth work will be elaborated below, it is useful here to point out that this mode of practice, sometimes referred to as 'street work', is usually focused on the engagement of 'hard-to-reach' young people and/or those unwilling or unable to access more conventional youth provision.

Detached practice entails youth workers walking the streets/visiting places that are popular among local young people and sometimes using mobile provision. Detached and outreach youth work can involve conducting home visits with a view to recruiting young people to participate in youth activities or providing on-site support.

There has been an increase in this type of youth work in a range of European countries as part of a wider shift away from longer-term, area-based projects, towards short-term work with particular high-risk groups or on those with particular issues, or as a result of recognition of the fact that mainstream services do not reach all young people.

According to the EU Commission document by Dunne, Ulicna, Murphy and Golubeva (2014), "(t)here are a number of ways that the emphasis on youth work has shifted in nature which includes:

The change in the policy rhetoric of young people as problematic to stressing the importance of young people for society and as a positive resource;

A stronger emphasis on intervention-based youth work and a greater focus on specific

target groups of young people, or youth work to tackle a specific issue."

The EU youth strategy seeks, in particular, to realise the full potential of youth work and youth centres as a means of inclusion.

The project aimed to explore the potential that detached youth work has to reach those youth who may be more at risk of social exclusion and who might be difficult to reach through other forms of youth work such as centre based youth work.

Project partners were selected on the basis of whether they would either benefit from or contribute to the project in some way. It was also seen as desirable for partners and the main beneficiaries of the project to be at a developmental and explorative stage in terms of detached youth work services. Partners who are more experienced in the delivery of services or delivering training for detached youth work were sought to facilitate learning from their good practices, to build the expertise of the other partners. These partners would also be able to contribute towards the establishment of quality assurance systems and tools during the pilot phase.

The partnership was established by using networks and organisations that Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ believed might be interested and willing to develop detached youth work projects and services.

Terms of reference for the project, outlining Aġenzija Żgħażaġħ's aims and objectives, were disseminated and communication established with those willing to partner in the project.

The partnership offered a diverse mix of academic, practical and professional experience in the field of youth work and youth policy with a government body, youth work NGO's and a higher education provider involved.



THE PROJECT AIMS INCLUDED:

1. Producing a background report on the localities where the detached youth work project will be piloted in Malta and Romania prior to initiating service provision;
2. The provision of eighteen months of detached youth work service delivery in Malta and Romania;
3. Producing an evaluation report of the pilot projects in Malta and Romania and evaluation of existing detached youth work projects in London and Rotterdam;
4. The provision of short-term detached youth work training for youth workers involved in the projects including the sharing of good practice by more experienced youth workers;
5. The mentoring of managers supervising the detached youth work pilot project staff to ensure that they receive the necessary support and that quality of service provision is safeguarded;
6. A dissemination activity in each partner country related to detached youth work and the activities of the project in the form of a seminar;
7. A report evaluating the detached youth work services provided by partners over the course of the project and documenting the impact of the partnership on the development of the service.

The evaluation was developed (via survey and questionnaire carried out in the two practice contexts). It provides an overall picture of practice initiated and/or energised by the project and demonstrates something of the legacy of the partnership both in terms of impact and future development.

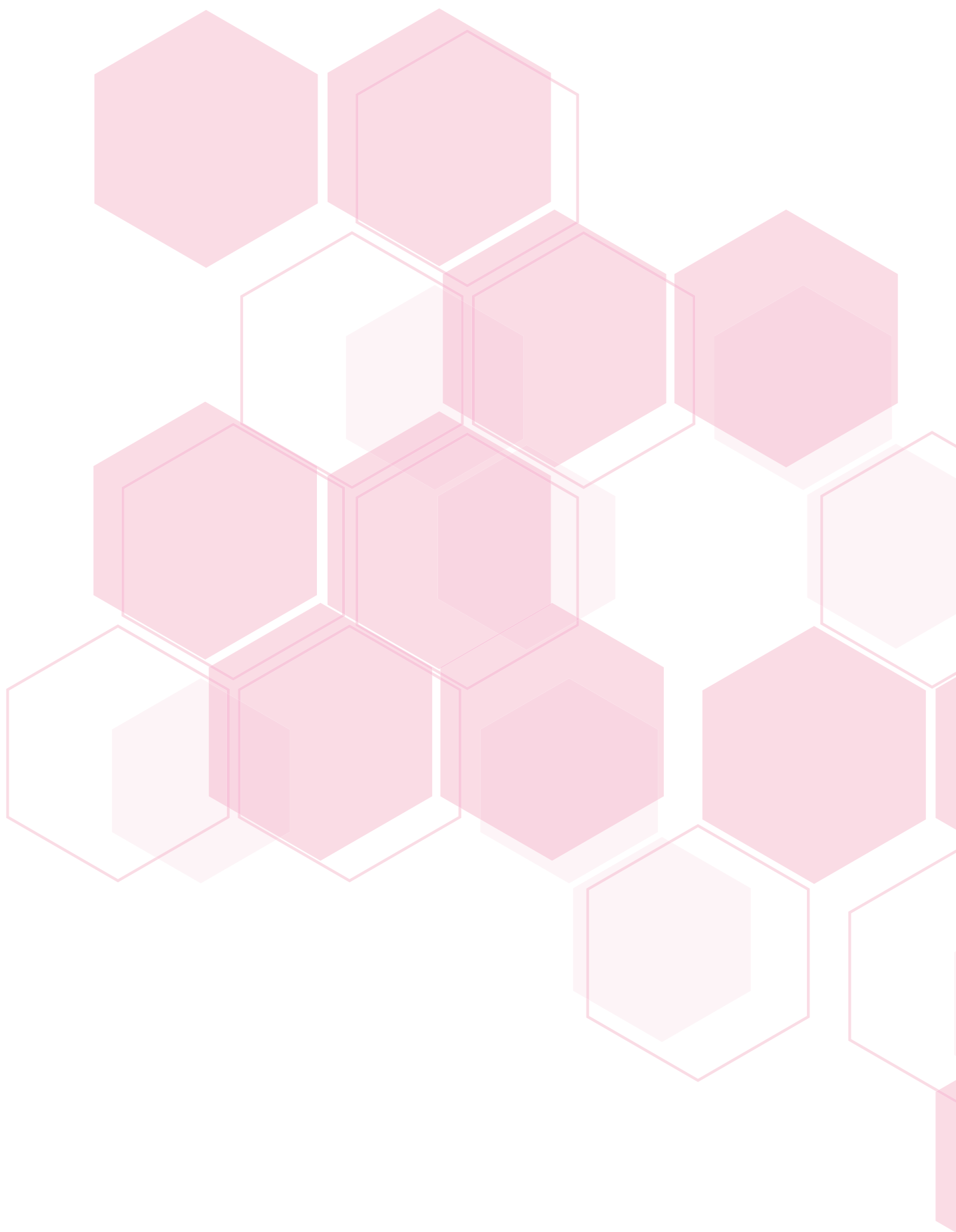
The work indicates that detached approaches need to be set in multifaceted practice which, although concerned with both care and learning, is principally accessed by young people because of the interest and positive regard they experience when associating with practitioners. In short, the users of the services provided by detached youth workers appear to be motivated by the prospect of personal and group validation, sensitivity to and awareness of their need to be listened and responded to, much more than the prospect of (for example) being (in some amorphous/vague way) educated.

The character of detached youth work appears to expose how young people, when understood via an asset focus, premised on consciousness of their innate abilities and specialist knowledge of their own situation, are prepared to teach youth workers how best to frame and develop their practice. This asset perspective stands in stark contrast to the application of deficit models, relating to perhaps all too often assumed incapacities and/or supposed relative ignorance.

The material below will outline the parameters of the current research and explore how this might expose how staid ideas about detached youth work may be effectively growing less relevant to young people if confined to instrumentalist training and pedagogic roles. The aforementioned imply an emphasis on 'leading' and instructing young people, so limiting the extent they might 'teach' practitioners, while developing their capacity to lead, represent and so authentically express themselves.

The latter has, since the inception of modern youth work after the Second World War, had a consistent place in the aims and ambitions youth workers have set themselves.

This in part might be understood as recognition of some of the main reasons young people have made use of services offered by youth workers.





Aġenzija Żġhażagħ was established in February 2011 to promote the interests of young people and to provide assistance to youth organisations and young people in achieving their potential.

The aim in establishing Aġenzija Żġhażagħ was to mainstream youth related issues, while further developing youth services. As such the current generation of detached and outreach practice is in keeping with this aim. Aġenzija Żġhażagħ's mission enables further investment in young people, with the overall objective to provide a coherent, cohesive, cross-sectoral and unified Government approach to addressing the needs and aspirations of young people and to realise the following benefits:

For Young people:

- More actions within existing policies for young people
- Greater participation, empowerment and dialogue for young people

For Policymaking and Policy makers:

- Change in attitudes and work culture to include a youth perspective
- Greater coherence in policymaking
- Better data and information on youth issues

Aġenzija Żġhażagħ's mission is to manage and implement the National Youth Policy to promote and safeguard the interests of young people which it pursues through the following policy measures:

- Youth Activity Centres at Villa Psaignon, Dingli and at Marsaxlokk
- The Youth Cafes in Malta at Qawra, Msida, Cottonera and Kirkop
- The Youth Hubs in Malta at Youth.Inc, MCAST, GCHSS, GEM 16+ and Junior College
- The Youth Village in St. Venera
- The Youth.Inc Programme

The development of detached and outreach practice will add to and consolidate the above.

The agency is committed to awareness raising and listening to young people. This is promoted by and associated with an interactive web portal Youth Information Malta and online support services Kellimni.Com

At European level, the agency engages on an on-going basis with the Youth Working Party, Youth Minister's Councils, the European Commission, EU Presidencies, the Council of Europe, and other European bodies.

Aġenzija Żġhażagħ has a record of providing programmes and initiatives for the active engagement and participation of young people. Training and support is provided for young people through projects that enhance their skills and competencies and empower them as both responsible individuals and active citizens in their communities. Projects include, inter alia: empowerment, civic engagement, music, volunteering, contemporary arts, specialized study support and drama. It also supports youth organisations to increase their capacity and potential.

The agency believes that research is essential within the youth field and that is why Aġenzija Żġhażagħ recognizes the importance of investing in this area. The outcome of such research is then utilized by the Empowerment Unit within the same agency to design the programmes that Aġenzija Żġhażagħ implements with young people.

CSCD is a non-governmental association established in 2010 with the objective to impact the development of rural communities in the South West of Romania, mainly in Dolj County.

Over almost 6 years CSCD has worked with more than 1,200 young people from 6 rural communities and set up local partnerships with the schools and with the village authorities.

At present, CSCD works directly with 3 groups of young people involved in projects in 3 rural communities, using community development and community organizing tools together with detached/outreach and open youth work methods. The work is delivered by trained youth workers, 2 researchers and a team of 10 volunteers.

CSCD is working closely with the public and with the non-governmental actors, having implemented over 20 projects resourced by EC, COE and EEA Grants. These initiatives have aimed to develop structured dialogue and social business models that would offer youth, specifically young people with relatively few opportunities, the means for personal and professional development.

CSCD is training youth workers (both from Romania and from other Member States of the Council of Europe) in;

- non-formal educational approaches;
- human rights education;
- social animation;
- self-directed learning methodologies;
- social entrepreneurship;
- inclusive education;
- education for citizenship;
- social business models;
- participatory action research;

- detached/outreach and open youth work.

While CSCD has no permanently employed staff, the executive board consists of trainers and experts in training and youth work methodologies. The President of the organisation offers expertise on youth policies to different youth NGOs and authorities. The team of volunteers (over 30) have knowledge and experience and interests in communication, youth policies, local events and so on. CSCD also benefit from the support of an expert on strategic development.

There is no social recognition of youth work in Romania, however despite this clear disadvantage, through the projects granted by the Council of Europe and European Commission, CSCD have been able to equip staff and volunteers from a number of NGOs as well as youth counsellors attached to local youth offices and authorities on working with non-formal methodologies, including elements of detached youth work. In 2010 it was able to train 30 youth leaders in social animation methodologies who were then able to deliver activities in rural schools.

In 2012, CSCD oversaw the delivery of training to 25 intercultural multipliers. Participants went on to promote methodologies learnt, working with young people in schools and youth NGOs.

In 2013, CSCD implemented training in leadership methodologies. A group of 24 youth leaders made up of Romanian and Roma youth leaders took part.

In 2012/2014, CSCD played a key role in setting up the European priorities in the youth field, including involvement on the Advisory Council on Youth at the

YMCA GEORGE WILLIAMS COLLEGE, UK

For close to half a century the YMCA George Williams College (hereafter called 'the College') has been the leading training/educational agency delivering professional qualifications in youth and community work. The institution has a national and international reputation, having qualified practitioners in locations as diverse as China, the Falkland Islands and Zambia.

At the same time historically the College has delivered a range of training, undertaken consultancy and research in Europe, Asia, Africa and America. Most recently the College has been involved in developing professional associations worldwide, while designing and delivering supervision and detached youth work training in the European context.

This international experience and involvement, socialising knowledge and learning from other contexts and situations, is a key motivating factor for the College's involvement in the partnership looking to develop, maintain and improve detached and outreach practice.

Since its founding in 1970, the College has developed innovative programmes from pre-qualifying to Masters and Doctorate level. It has developed resources and research supporting the needs of workers and managers in a range of settings.

With the best collection of specialist youth work related resources in Britain housed in the Mary Crosby Library the College has earned financial support for its work from over a dozen different charities and organisations to keep the College up-to-date in programme development and open to all students and communities. In addition, the institution hosts the Encyclopaedia of Informal Education (infed) website www.infed.org that supports thousands of students around the world on their programmes of study.

The College is highly respected and has a reputation for being dedicated to excellence in training within the fields of youth work and community learning and development. Being part of the YMCA, a worldwide voluntary movement the College welcomes people of all faiths and none, valuing diversity and the development of the whole person – mind, body and spirit. This includes challenging discrimination and harassment of any kind, promoting an inclusive environment.

The National Student Survey (NSS) looks at final year students' views of their experience including teaching, assessment and feedback, academic support, organisation and management, learning resources, personal development and overall

STICHTING JONG ROTTERDAM (FOUNDATION YOUTH ROTTERDAM)

This is a specialist youth work organisation, employing qualified youth workers, based in Rotterdam, Netherlands. Stichting Jong Rotterdam sees youth work as educational, being deployed in casual situations, providing forms of non-formal learning.

The Foundation has a reputation for its understanding of the youth work field throughout Rotterdam and the Netherlands. This encompasses supervision and coaching,

In order to determine how detached youth work can be initiated and/or developed there needs to be a clear definition of practice. However, over the course of this project it has not been our object to replicate or underwrite any particular theory or approach to practice. We have been looking at how we might develop both theory and practice in response to unique social and cultural contexts.

Too often practice (as mooted according to practitioners, academics, writers) appears to be delivered via a colonial mentality in that it is something 'done to' young people. This effectively demands that young people fit in with favoured paradigms, approaches and techniques that are often, counter intuitively, referred to in quite definite (formal) and generic terms as 'non-formal' or 'informal' responses. One of the main aims of this project has been to respond in the diametrical opposite way to this; to examine how a broad definition of detached practice might be built around, and so be responsive to, the needs and wants of young people in Romania and Malta. This is in keeping with the notion (fostered by the YMCA George Williams College) that useful theory arises out of practice, while the blind acceptance and application of theory (fashioned at a distance from practice) is often at least inappropriate and at worse detrimental to practice with its basis in particular socio-cultural contexts.

YOUTH WORK

Models of what youth work 'is' have traditionally been quite prescriptive. This is strange for work that is claimed to be relatively informal and liberal. Many of these models have their source in the UK, religious organisations and uniformed traditions such as the Scouts. However youth work has also been shaped by European influences related to social pedagogy and largely secular, state sponsored youth movements of the 1930s and 1940s.

To make a definite statement about what youth work might be is to start on the false premise that it is one thing.

Given the range of voices, contexts, tasks, approaches, views and functions of youth work internationally how could we claim that it is any single, consistent or constant something over or between contexts, throughout time?

One can try to give a general idea of the mutable shape and motivation of practice, a 'place to stand' (for now, for a moment) but this will be developed and altered rather than adhered to in any regimented way. To label youth work as 'this' or 'that' immutably is to ossify cultural and/or social development of practice. At the same time it would be in effect a contradiction in terms and practice.

We can probably claim that youth work is an evolutionary project – if it is anything unfailingly it is a 'growth business'. Although it is understandable, if one is confined to any one context, to believe it is or has definitively been this or that fundamentally or primarily. Part of the understanding that has bloomed as a joint creation of the international collaboration this project represents is the consciousness that youth work is necessarily a diverse practice that exists within a theoretical milieu. To see it otherwise would be to promote a lock down of what youth work is or might be; to suggest a notional stasis, is to bolt youth work into a 'carceral archipelago' of a conventional or acceptable trajectory. This would be the antithesis of practice, which would effectively destroy it as youth work. For all this, not a few writers have effectively touted to achieve just this, or perhaps identified (put a flag in) what they see (or want to be) the 'core' of youth work practice.

But youth work is not an apple. A global and historical perspective of youth work clearly shows it to be a relentlessly developing range of responses to a persistently moving, growing and shifting range of phenomena, issues and directions presented by and to societies and the young people of and in those societies.

This being the case this evaluation looks at practice responses in the face of and from within that shifting field that can generically be called 'youth work'. This is carried from a number of places and a diversity of identity.

Trying to cobble together a central theory or fulcrum of practice is seductive; there is security in being able to say 'that is this' – but security is not the goal – curiosity, discovery and learning are chancy pursuits, that's what makes them exciting. The hope for security is an anathema in this adventure. However, there is the illusion of status in being 'at the core'; one can identify oneself as an 'expert', part of an elite or priesthood of sorts, inhabiting the 'inner sanctum' of professional knowledge. One can see this as being attractive to the insecure; the first task of any group that craves protection is to set up a cabal, cult or clique; a freemasonry of 'fellows'. But the cult or closed shop the expert inhabits is a contradiction in terms of intellectual activity and logically also with regard to inclusionary practice. The search for central principles, set in stone, to create a 'community of practice' is redolent of the

above. The moment one sets the parameters of a community a distinct group of the included are recognized, but at the same time this identifies those excluded (not of) that community. The higher the walls, the less permeable the boundaries of any given community, the more difficult it is for people or knowledge of others or the world to get in or out. This is why the more impermeable a community is (the more 'specialist' it becomes) the more it turns into the locale of prejudice and discrimination ('we' are like this, so we are 'in', they are like 'that' so they are 'out'). This is the incarnation of Max Weber's 'social closure'. It is to be hoped that partners might think of youth work, its development and practice, more in the vein of an idealised incarnation encompassing the potential of the inclusiveness of all.

TOWARDS BUILDING A CONCEPT OF YOUTH WORK

For all the above, to operate and do what we can to evaluate practice we need some parameters.

What is Youth Work?

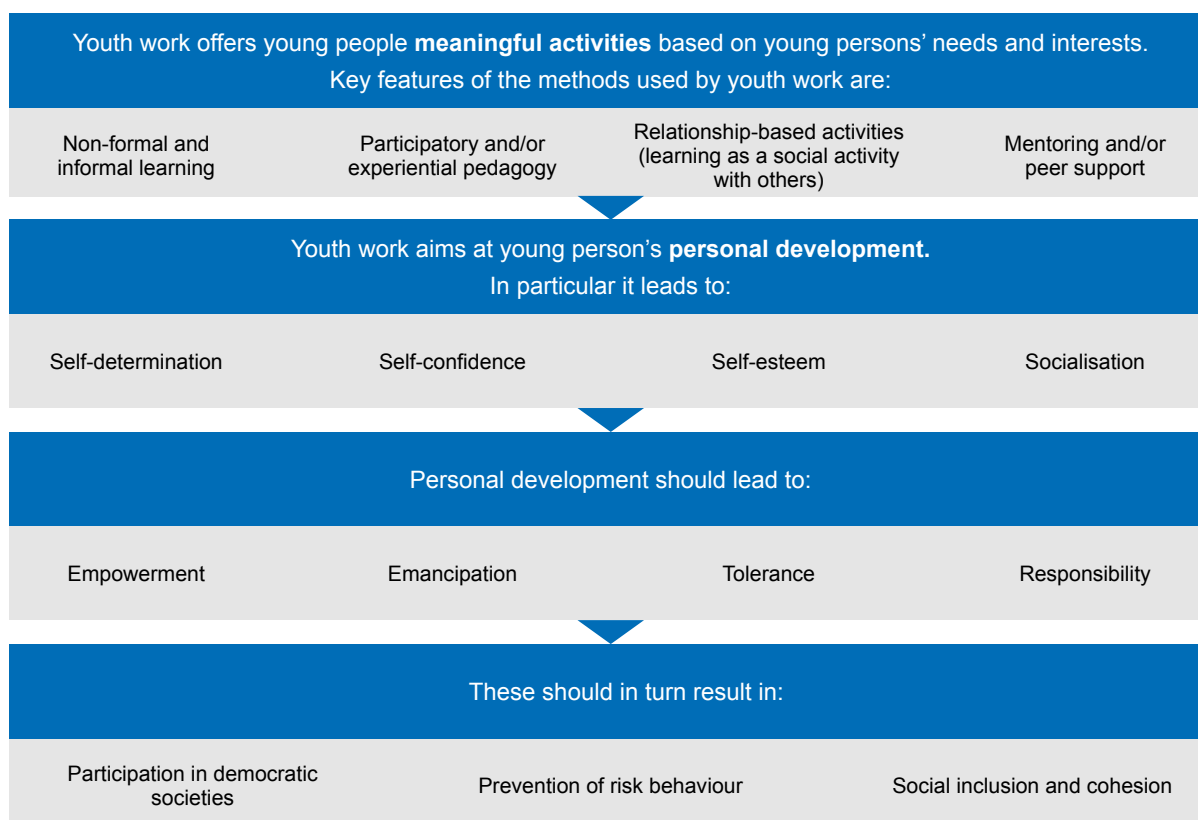
According to Dunne et.al. (2014)

"The term 'youth work' is used to describe a diverse range of activities, topics and measures provided by a range of actors in

assorted fields and settings. However, at the heart of youth work there are three core features that define it as youth work distinct from other policy fields:

- A focus on young people,
- personal development,
- and voluntary participation."

Dunne et.al. (2014:14)



From: Dunne et.al. (2014:5)

However, it should be noted that individual countries have adopted no formal definition of youth work and amongst those that have, there is a variety of definitions.

This said, youth work can be generally defined as a profession practiced by those working with young people in a range of settings. Youth workers, worldwide, can be found working in clubs and detached (street based) settings, within social/welfare services, sports/leisure provision, schools and, over the last decade or so in museums, arts facilities, libraries, hospitals, leisure and sports centres, children’s homes and young offenders institutions.

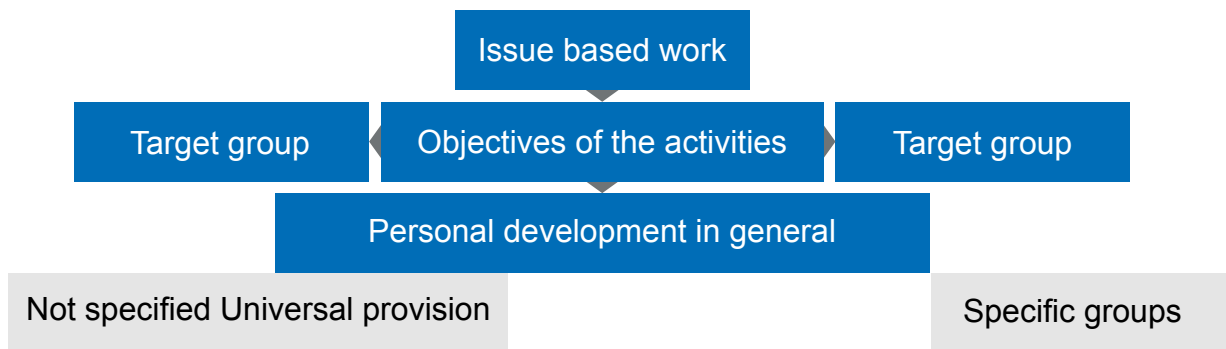
The focus of youth work is on (but not limited to):

1. *(Primarily) The well-being of young people*
This includes attention to and working with young people, their parents, guardians and carers to understand, relate to and make use of their rights, promoting and having concern for young people’s welfare, while extending appropriate professional care.
2. *The social learning of young people.*
This is not usually simply forms of instruction, but includes a range of approaches, mostly developing learning opportunities out of everyday experience, including leisure and social pursuits, but also calling on more formal methods when appropriate

Belton 2014:4-5

The above, although for purposes of analysis separated into two discreet areas, might be usefully understood as complimentary foci; one confirms and enacts the other. The overall aim of youth work is to enhance the life experience of young people and their contribution to society as active, involved, useful and valued citizens.

This said, Dunne et.al. (2014:5) because of the variety of activities that are seen to be or understood as youth work, suggests a “typology of youth work practice to capture the types of activities and the focus of youth work.”



Adapted from: Dunne et.al. (2014:6)

The above distinguishes between the objectives and the target group of the youth work activity. For the most part youth work practice can be located somewhere within this model that ranges from broad focus - universal provision (aimed at all young people) to specific focal points (young people who are homeless, those with disabilities and/or learning difficulties or Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender groups).

However, Dunne et.al. (2014) states:

The youth work sector continues to evolve and is gaining increasing prominence on the political agenda at the EU and Member State levels. Youth work organisations themselves also adapt to the changing needs and contexts of young people.

Dunne et.al. (2014:6)

The model also shows that the objectives of youth work run from the expansive objective of personal development to practice concentrated on definite, clearly defined issues.

THE COMMISSION FOUND THAT THERE IS AN ARRAY OF SALIENT TRENDS:

Growing emphasis on

- Measurable outcomes and standards
- Evidence-based youth work
- Targeted youth work, focusing on specific groups
- Developing education and labour market skills
- Intervention-based youth work, targeting specific issues faced by some young people

Increase

- Demand for youth work
- Professionalisation and professionalised youth workers
- Collaboration with other stakeholders

Decline

- Upfront financing
- Traditional forms of youth work
- Emphasis on talent development/leisure activities

From: Dunne et.al. (2014:6)

This said, the function of youth work, historically and socially, has adapted and changed according to social, economic and political needs and exigencies. As Dunne et.al. argue:

- a) There is a growing demand for youth work;
- b) There are increased expectations that youth work deliver successful outcomes and
- c) The need for evidence of success requires that youth work providers achieve a balance between;
 - i) meeting the priorities set out in policies and funding mechanisms with an ever increasing trend for youth work practice to be more target-group based, address specific issues and be intervention based;
 - ii) responding to the individual needs and interests of young people;
 - iii) whilst maintaining the core principles that form the foundation of youth work practice.

Looking at this, alongside the experience and practice undertaken during this project, the diverse range of practice in the European context and beyond, partners might be understood to have broadly agreed that the central purpose of youth work could be defined as:

Working with young people, within the parameters of required funding and policy outcomes, in order that they might play an assertive and constructive role in the strengthening and regeneration of their immediate communities and wider society.

There has been ongoing pressure for youth work to become 'informal education' or latterly identify a 'core' competence or function, such as 'social pedagogy'. However the move towards specialization threatens to effectively deskill youth workers, transforming them from a highly responsive and flexible social provision, into mobile class room assistants, homework tutors or surrogate remedial teachers.

In a number of global regions youth workers can be found working directly for the government or local government, often involved in community development and community learning situations, capacity building, providing forms of accredited and non-accredited learning. However, in Europe for example, more and more they are deployed by voluntary organisations (although via a range of funding arrangements, including direct and indirect state resources) in issue-related work (drugs, sexual health, homelessness, parenting etc.). Many such organisations, particularly faith based groups, will concentrate more on less directive and informal practice, although most youth work will be set within formal institutions and include forms of guidance and instruction from time to time. Like a good teacher a skilled youth worker will blur the rather false dichotomy of informal and formal learning.

Youth workers can and are involved in education; they are employed and operate in formal institutions like schools, colleges and universities and can, in such situation, be thought of as wholly involved in the external structures that are education. However, their work is nearly always more inclined to working with young people that the latter might be motivated or inspired to learn; learning being an internal, psychological event or events. On a consistent basis this might be thought of as the 'getting of wisdom'. While schools and other related institutions might almost invariably be tasked with delivering education, they are not always, for everyone, unfailingly places of learning. In different places and different times they are and have been (wholly or partly, consciously or inadvertently) sites of indoctrination, propaganda or dominated by forms of memorization and the pressure to conform.

Youth workers can be found working for non-governmental organisations in sport, arts, social welfare and health fields, and appreciable numbers will be involved in the government/statutory sector, as youth service officers or youth volunteers within Youth Ministries, other Ministries and Departments.

Globally, youth work is a very diverse profession in terms of social tasks and employment situations. However, broadly speaking youth work:

- Has an emphasis on association, as defined by young people. These include young people's alliance with youth workers and with their own peers and social groups.

This emphasis implies serving young people as people and not as 'issues' and/or 'problems'.

- Starts from young people's perspective (their ways of understanding the world and the benefits they see as coming from their involvement). Practitioners demonstrate that they grasp young people's potential to influence and take authority over their own lives, and how they want to be involved with youth workers, what they want to discover and what needs they want to be addressed.
- Emerges by way of dialectic that starts with the appreciation of young people and their ideas and continues via meaningful exchanges with practitioners. As this develops young people can identify appropriate channels to make their individual and collective voices heard and so influence decision-making at local, national and transnational levels.
- Invites young people to build and take opportunities so they can enhance their own personal and social development. This not unusually involves their participation in activities and experiences that are new to them, so broadening their perspectives and understanding of society.
- Can be used by young people to promote their welfare, making use of a range of preventative services that can be used to avoid their disaffection and exclusion. This might include youth workers working with young people to become self-advocating, expressing their views while developing their understanding of policy, social situations etc.

DETACHED YOUTH WORK

What differentiates detached youth work from other forms of youth work?

Detached youth work is similar to other forms of youth work (generic, centre based etc.). Some have argued that practitioner readiness to negotiate around issues of power, authority and control is what differentiates detached practice. However, the association between adults

and young people will always present debates and contradictions related to such considerations. While these discussions might be different in the detached context, they cannot be avoided. Adults have responsibilities and duties towards young people, while the rights of young people are nearly always defined by way of adult duties.

SPACE

Youth work happens in and from the spaces young people occupy (what they determine to be their wants, territory, needs, interests, concerns and lifestyle). Detached youth work, however, is often said to be distinct from other forms of youth work because detached youth workers work where young people have chosen to be (streets, cafes, shopping malls and so on). However this is a misconception as often young people are found more in places where they can be than in situations where they want to be. These are often spaces free from official or adult supervision and/or surveillance. As such they arrive in such locales sometimes as a *fait accompli* rather than by way of choice. Detached youth workers turning up in such places can often interfere or disrupt such resorts. Another feature that is said to mark out detached youth workers from other practitioners is that they are not obliged to look after buildings. However as adults and sometimes employees of social organisations or even local government, they cannot be without a care for the physical context they meet young people in, as well as of the care of the same and the young people inhabiting those spaces. The laws of trespass for instance need to be considered.

It has also been claimed that detached practice allow youth workers to engage with young people whose lifestyles are often more chaotic and out of sync with the rules, regulations and prescriptive nature of other forms of youth work (for example see Crimmens, Factor, Jeffs, Pitts, Pugh, Spence and Turner, 2004:74). This is once more something of a misconception as cafes, shopping malls, even the streets are enmeshed with law, property considerations, rights of way and so on; these spaces have their own rules and regulations, limitations and strictures, sometimes more profound and obvious than designated or specialised youth facilities. Therefore young people with complex backgrounds and issues might be more likely to resort to 'safer' areas than the street might offer.

As such, common claims that detached work can proceed without the imposition of predetermined agenda, are something

of a fallacy. At the same time claims that potential for learning is greater via ad-hoc schema than might be had via pre-set learning agenda have no basis in evidence.

For all this, young people that detached youth workers meet with are usually congregating in order to interact socially, mostly with friends, people that are known to them and perhaps with the aim of sometimes meeting new people. If requests for support, help, guidance, assistance and so on are made, they almost always materialize from this social milieu.

Traditionally youth work has aimed to avoid demanding that young people take part in set activities; as a practice it is not instructional. If it were it might be understood to contradict the claims that it is based on dialogue, negotiation and democratic responses to young people.

Youth work is built on the ability of practitioners to make professional judgements. As noted above, many young, perhaps the majority in some contexts, reject designated youth provision, so effectively bringing youth provision to them risks rejection of the practitioner's efforts or young people avoiding or distancing themselves from detached youth workers.

This being the case, detached youth work is obliged to be invitational in its ethos, and a two way encounter. This allows the association between practitioner and young people to emerge from a mutual interest, curiosity and perhaps in time, sense of solidarity. The worker and the young people can be involved in developing a joint understanding of the context within a nexus of expression, premised on listening and shared learning perhaps starting with perceptions of the immediate situation and environment; 'why are we here?'

This is inevitably a process of negotiation, unavoidably encompassing ideas of control, domination and licence; 'what right have you to be here?' From the start we orient ourselves (worker and youth) so a start can be made from the solid foundation of established identity and honesty of purpose.

Youth work is political because it is involved in a process that engenders young people participating in decision-making systems. As part of this detached work can build bridges (create access/introductions) to wider youth provision. Detached work might take the street as its starting point, but its trajectory is not limited to this setting.

It has become something of a mantra that detached youth work is dependent on young people's voluntary participation. In comparison it is claimed that building-based youth work requires young people to compromise their freedom in terms of involvement; they are obliged to tolerate the constraints of a physical structure; the parameters of building-based practice are said to be more tightly drawn relative to detached youth work. Part of the previous analysis suggests this is a fallacy. Young people choose to take part in any youth work (other than that subject to legal referral, say by way of school or social work orders) although often this might be as a result of a lack of alternative provision.

In some contexts (and this is notably the case with the projects we encountered in Romania) lack of accessibility to centre-based youth work necessitates developing a detached youth work response. However, detached youth work is connected to the wider context of youth work and as such setting up artificial barriers between detached work and other youth work responses is a questionable pursuit. Some forms of 'street work' and non-building based responses have, by some groups of youth workers, been (quite vociferously) rejected as manifestations of detached youth work.

For instance, outreach work, practice that is primarily aimed at 'reaching out' to young people with a view to informing them about other services or provision has been deemed not to be detached work. Outreach is usually conducted from a hub, centre or building-based agency. The aim of such work is usually about making contact with young people, looking to inform them about the work of a given agency, likely in the hope of inviting them and/or their friends to use services the agency might offer.

Detached and outreach workers might work from a mobile facility (for example a bus). Over recent years they have been used in institutional settings, such as schools and colleges, targeting social areas (common rooms, playgrounds etc.) where they can work with young people, inviting them to take part in more formalised meetings and activities.

Outreach workers may also take a service out to those who might not otherwise use it, without obligation to use building-based services thereafter. Like detached workers they often target town centres, parks or shopping malls and may take an issue-based approach, working to address local, communal or national concerns (substance

abuse, anti-social behaviour, youth offending, teenage pregnancy and so on).

This said, outreach approaches and tasks often clearly overlap with the role of many detached youth work projects. The claims that detached youth workers can differentiate themselves from those undertaking outreach practice by asserting that they work with young people in settings of their choice and without an exact service orientation has become over recent years increasingly questionable. Outreach workers often have a relatively flexible approach that is largely invitational (choice) oriented. At the same time funding requirements, and social demands that work be seen to be 'value for money' have increasingly caused detached youth workers to target particular 'at risk' groups. As such, the dichotomy between detached and outreach work has blurred. Indeed, it is questionable if it ever existed to any significant way when one looks at the inclinations and approaches of detached youth workers over decades.

Likewise, mobile provision (often 'vehicle-based') has been, by some writers, academics and practitioners characterised as strictly outreach. However detached youth work has long made use of vehicles (vans to transport sporting and leisure equipment, minibuses for trips and residential activities). This is excused by those who seem intent on demarcating one approach from another by claims that these vehicles have been used to support the work rather than becoming the focus of it. This is clearly needlessly splitting hairs as anyone who has carried out youth work in a minibus will know. The 'foci' of all youth work is young people, regardless of context or environment; the context may (or may not) have an impact on practice, but does not of necessity radically reshape the nature or purpose of practice.

Traditionally advocates of detached youth work have also seen street-based youth work as taking a different emphasis because it takes place solely on the street. They argue that by contrast, detached youth work can happen wherever young people may be (libraries, cafes, malls, parks etc.) including street settings. This, of course, misunderstands (or shows a lack of awareness that street workers would argue that they often find themselves practicing in such contexts (as do outreach workers).

It is argued that unlike schools and colleges (for instance) detached youth workers practice in fundamentally non-formal contexts, places where young people are not obliged to take part in particular activities. Yet again, street and outreach workers might make the same claims. However parks, malls, cafes and even the street are not 'free' environments. They are controlled areas (by property owners, security staff, police and so on). There are demands made, generally by adult society that behaviour is socially acceptable and in context (shopping malls are for shopping, cafes will rarely allow people to sit in them without purchasing something, and particular behaviour is not just requested but demanded). As such, it is debatable if detached contexts have less formal demands than designated youth facilities. Certainly much of the language and behaviour seen in some youth facilities would not be tolerated in more public arenas.

So what is detached work? Taking a more global and contemporary view, in practice detached youth work might be said to encompass a range of approaches, that probably in various contexts embraces outreach and street work approaches. Detached youth work endeavours to provide a broad-based, open-ended response to the wants and needs of young people, in ways that facilitate listening to what young people say and in a manner that allows for emergence of their perspectives and ideas about themselves and the world. This may lead to youth workers, alongside young people, discovering things about themselves and their context, and developing ways to act on and maybe change wider situations and circumstances.

Detached youth work is not necessarily less institutional than other forms of practice, but it might allow for practice to reach out to those who do not want or (for a range of reasons) cannot be part of building based practice. As such it can act both as a bridge to centre-based work, or can be freestanding as a response. It is hard to see why we might place limitations on its purpose, use or outcomes just for the sake of it. Detached youth work can be, essentially, what young people and practitioners (using appropriate judgement) want to make it. It is not a cake, made with particular ingredients and technique; it is an approach to the complexity of human needs and wants. Perhaps in its most useful and rich incarnation detached youth work goes where it can, to do what it can, so young people can be advantaged as much as they can.

This said, detached youth work might be understood to focus on engaging with young people who are not or only partly accessing services, often when there are obstacles to their participation (such as when no designated youth facilities exist).

This might be understood as a short but effective and authentic definition of detached practice. The aims of detached youth work might be understood as being:

- To make contact and be available to young people in a range of settings;
- To work with young people in a way that facilitates their gaining of knowledge, recognising new opportunities, and engage (as much as they might want) with the world around them;
- To build useful associations with young people via dialogue and the effort to understand their situation and perspectives;
- To identify and respond to the needs and agendas of individuals and groups of young people by developing appropriate strategies for action which are both learning oriented and fun;
- To support and question young people's attitudes and actions towards issues that might be relevant to them and/or their communities/societies (for instance unemployment, substance use, alcohol, poverty, racism, sexism, disability, housing, health, sexuality and criminality);
- To work with young people to influence and so gain authority over their context and life direction;
- To support appropriate action that young people take resulting from their own perspectives, ideas and suggestions;
- To work within a nexus of care and a framework that takes children's and human rights into consideration;
- To build bridges of understanding between the adult society and young people;

- To work with young people to highlight issues affecting them and act as advocates for and with them within the wider context.

On the basis of the above analysis a clear statement of the contextual aims for detached youth work can be developed. Practitioners need to be familiar with the same in order that they might continue to build a relevant social/cultural response to practice.



While training has been an aspect in all contexts of the project, a dedicated training event was hosted by Stichting Jong Rotterdam from 12 to 15 May 2015. This was chiefly concerned with developing methods and approaches to detached practice.

The following areas were broached:

- The principles of youth work
- The nature of detached practice, including some theoretical perspectives
- Gathering information (mapping)
- Managing first contacts with young people
- Instigating dialogue, developing trust and building relationships with young people
- Working and sharing information with other agencies, professionals and the social environment
- Analysis of the individual/group make up/ behaviour and context
- Planning approaches, establishing clear, achievable targets and overall strategy
- Managing stakeholder expectations
- Translating practice for those not involved or unfamiliar with youth work
- Reviewing practice outcomes

Throughout the training period the inclusion and participation of young people in practice direction was stressed, this encompassed exploration of the potential for individuals and groups to organise their own activities and work together with other groups and the wider social setting. It was emphasized how the latter might be beneficial in building social and responsibility taking skills.

A field trip to Gouda was organised, which included participants accompanying and observing Jong Gouda youth workers undertaking detached practice in the city. Participants also met civil servants of the city of Gouda, principally focusing on the mandate of Jong Gouda and the municipal rationale for deploying detached youth workers.

A visit to a police station encompassed a talk by community police officers who highlighted the importance of their collaboration with youth workers.

Throughout the training event participants were encouraged to discuss their practice context and brought examples of the same for exploration. This included them sharing their own understanding and expertise, which informed and educated host practitioners. Thus the training event usefully evolved into something more enriching than an instructional seminar, providing a mutual learning situation for all involved. Fresh perspectives and questions revitalized and enhanced more traditional and conventional paradigms.

Overall the training programme allowed participants to experience a different context of practice and examine, discuss and question various practice responses. Importantly, in subsequent discussions participants were able to explore how the latter might (or might not) be adapted to their own practice environments. Most significantly perhaps the efficacy and ethical considerations related to ideas about the 'broad brush' application of planned, prescriptive methods, techniques, tactics and strategies to young people (that risk being experienced by young people as 'tricks' and/or manipulation) were examined and critiqued. This was undertaken while being mindful of practitioner morality, values, attitudes and inter-personal skills in relation to wider practice principles, requirements, codes of conduct, human rights and ethics as well as the social/public/legal expectations of youth work generally.

AĠENZIJA ŻĠHAŻAĠH - MALTA AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF DETACHED YOUTH WORK

Prior to developing detached and outreach work the services Aġenzija Żġhażagh offered young people were mainly limited to centre based provision in community centres or post-secondary institutions. These facilities functioned as drop-in centres.

Aġenzija Żġhażagh was aware that a relatively small percentage of young people frequented youth organisations and other youth work provision. This being the case, developing the agency's capacity to reach out to young people in other non-traditional youth work settings seemed to be the next logical step.

The idea of a pilot project was discussed following the hosting of a training which provided an introduction to outreach and detached youth work. Internal discussions were held looking at the feasibility, necessity and effectiveness of such a service in the local context and different ways of delivering such a service.

The Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership for Youth programme was identified as a potential avenue for the establishment of a learning partnership that would bring together service providers wishing to develop their capacity in this field with organisations who already had both academic and practical experience in outreach and detached work.

Following the identification of the initial team of youth workers to be involved in the pilot project, terms of reference were developed defining what detached youth work is and what it is not in the Maltese context. On the basis of this the aims of the service were established as well as what information would need to be collected as part of getting to understand the communities where the detached youth work would be conducted. Potential indicators were identified to ensure robust evaluation of service outcomes.

DETACHED AND OUTREACH YOUTH WORK IN MALTA

In Malta detached practice centrally relies on the practitioner being able to learn from the client about the client (the latter's culture, personal and social situation, needs, wants, ambitions, issues etc.).

Thus two central skills of the detached youth worker are;

- a) being able to cultivate 'learning associations' with young people wherein the latter are able and willing to teach practitioners about their situation and circumstances;
- b) readiness and being willing to be taught by young people about their perspectives and experience of the world.

Overall, outreach and detached workers need to be able to generate environments that implicate both the worker and the young person in a collaborative process of:

- awareness/consciousness raising;
- the development of insight; and
- the getting of wisdom on the part of both the practitioner and the client.

Such an attitude seeks to avoid the adoption of deficit models of young people and colonial attitudes to practice (not so much 'what you need to be is more like me' or 'what I think you should be like' but more 'we are working together towards becoming who you want to be').

DETACHED YOUTH WORK:

- is an on-going process, although associations with young people can happen only once or recur over time; and
- happens in a shared public space (sometimes known as a 'third space')

where young people are better positioned to make choices on their level of engagement with the youth worker on their own terms;

- offers support, care, non-formal (and where appropriate formal) learning opportunities to groups and individuals;
- addresses young people's issues, concerns, interests and aspirations;
- relies on the voluntary involvement of young people;
- works (usually but not always) without the constraints of building based responsibilities but within the constraints of the laws on the use of private and/or public property;
- responds to individual, group and social needs;
- demands creative approaches by youth work staff;
- requires skilled, well trained staff with effective managerial support and supervision.

Detached youth work 'best practice' is premised on young people being able to rely on a regular pattern of contact, but also the professional judgement of practitioners in terms of when to withdraw from practice (this is a two way street, that can involve the decisions of either or both practitioner and client)

DETACHED YOUTH WORK IS NOT:

- youth worker's wandering around aimlessly;
- policing young people;
- about getting young people into building based provision;
- effective if it operates in isolation from other service provision (although this does not preclude referral to or occasional use of other services facilities).

DETACHED, OUTREACH AND CENTRE BASED WORK

- Outreach work is generally geared towards sign-posting young people to already existing services.
- Detached youth work tends to be aimed at engagement with young people that can happen once or recur over time but that is not necessarily aimed at referral or direction towards other services.
- Detached youth work facilitates access of youth services for young people who might not identify with, be anxious about or who for any reason are reluctant or unable to access more conventional youth facilities.
- Centre based work generally happens in buildings and spaces that, at least part of the time, are specifically intentioned for work with young people.

THE PRINCIPLES AND VALUES THAT UNDERPIN PRACTICE

We take the above to be the following;

- facilitating the process of mutual learning between youth worker and young person;
- the duty of care that a youth worker has towards the young person;
- the need to operate within a human rights framework that is respectful of the young people we are working with.

FOUNDATIONAL RESEARCH

The youth workers spent three months laying the ground for the project.

This included;

- collecting and collating the information, including the data about existing services offered in the communities;

- meeting with law enforcement officials, local council representatives and other major community actors/ stakeholders;
- familiarising themselves with the localities targeted, including walking around the area and observing where young people tended to congregate and what activities they engaged in. The workers varied the days and times of their observations.

The above helped youth workers to obtain a clear perspective of the activity and presence of young people and how to best invest the limited time/resources available for detached youth work. It also provided the basis for the next level of research.

This involved:

- identifying and liaising with others who are working in the same area (other agencies, community groups, residents, and other youth provision);
- identifying potential target groups of young people through reconnaissance, although not necessarily making contact at that stage;
- looking at other aspects of the local community which might impact on young people's lives (this was carried out with due diligence in terms used and conscious attention to avoid unwarranted labelling).

Much of the above was generated from conversations with young people.

A brief and simple community profile was generated.

This included information relating to:

- bus routes, numbers and times
- nearest police station and phone number/s + opening times
- names of Police Officers
- job centre address, phone and opening times

- pharmacies and health centres
- post offices
- social work services direct
- schools
- phone numbers
- youth centres and projects
- young people's leisure facilities (football grounds, parks, etc.)
- shops
- rain shelters
- phone boxes
- areas of high graffiti
- other professionals based in the area
- unsafe, unlit or derelict areas
- churches
- big local employers
- bars and clubs
- names of Mayor, local councillors and MP's
- details of residents' complaints
- recent local press coverage of young people's issues
- NEET (not in education, employment or training)
- statistics and 'hotspots'

The possibility that a separate reconnaissance in the summer months might be required as the patterns of where and when young people are on the streets might change significantly was also considered.

As a whole the resultant data helped workers develop ideas and perspectives about activities, approach as well as the nature of and potential strategies for future practice. It also laid the ground for establishing the terms of reference for detached and outreach practice and a set of potential indicators that could serve to measure the outcome of the project were identified.

These included data connected with:

- information handed out (the nature of this information and number of young people it was given to);
- approximate number of young people encountered (age range/gender);
- approximate number of young people who access other services through detached youth work intervention;

- projects and activities undertaken;
- hours of service provision – this might include logs of
- practitioner activity and impressions of practice sessions;
- records from supervision sessions;
- feedback from the young people about service provision (activities and interactions);
- feedback from other community stakeholders on service provision.
- find creative approaches to engage with young people in a variety of settings including streets, parks, open space, pubs and cafes;
- offer support, informal education and learning opportunities to groups and individuals;
- be aware of, acknowledge and promote young people’s rights;
- be able to provide opportunities for young people to understand and exercise their rights and be active participants within their communities.

Developing aims and expected outcomes of detached practice

The development of the aims and expected outcomes has involved a collaborative process, including research into how outreach and detached services (primarily in the UK and Ireland) tended to measure the quality, impact and outcome of similar service provision. Internal discussion and consultation also took place between the management and youth workers in consultation with the external expert.

A recording system and regular group supervision meetings helped provide the direction, structure and the thinking about what the agency hoped to achieve through outreach and detached services.

The nature of the engagement of the youth workers with young people and the kinds of interventions that were conducted served to further clarify what kinds of learning experiences could realistically be shaped and achieved.

STAFF SELECTION/RECRUITMENT

Detached youth workers were identified based on their qualifications, availability and interest in being involved in the project. Recruitment criteria were informed by the above research. Youth workers wishing to be involved in the pilot of the Detached Youth Work Service needed to possess or be willing to develop the ability to:

PRACTICE RESEARCH

The youth workers kept log sheets of every detached youth work session. This provided information about a range of aspects about what workers were doing.

With regard to young people encountered this included;

- the number engaged with;
- a gender breakdown;
- the age range;
- the nature of the associations made;
- the effectiveness of interactions and interventions.

Other information involved;

- where and when the service was offered;
- how practice could be improved.

This has resulted in managers and youth workers extending their understanding of young people’s wants and needs in terms of what detached services can offer. The resultant growth in confidence in service design and delivery has meant that intervention has progressed and is no longer simply reacting to the immediate environment and circumstances of young people. Currently practitioners are involved in planning projects and activities alongside young people, motivating and delivering innovative and purposeful practice.

GUIDELINES FOR PRACTICE

Managers and practitioners were guided by the development of terms of reference for detached practice.

A good practice guide on the Protection, Safety and Well-being of Young People was also adopted by the agency to ensure professional conduct in the provision of services.

It is crucial that young people are made aware of who is engaging with them and why. Data protection standards need to be understood and maintained. Knowledge and maintenance of health and safety and child safety standards maintained.

Youth workers should receive regular training in, be aware of, understand, maintain and review professional and ethical standards in their interactions with young people and adhere to agency guidelines and procedures in their practice.

TRAINING

The training provided during the Rotterdam visit helped to guide the piloting of the service as did the evaluation visit conducted in October 2015.

Managers and staff attended the training provided prior to the start of the project. Training was incorporated into the project as part of the partners meeting held in Rotterdam in March 2015.

The evaluation visit conducted in October 2015 also served as a training opportunity, leading to a clearer understanding of what outreach and detached work could achieve in the Maltese context and what kind of management structures might be required to ensure quality of service provision.

Being able to partner with a number of experienced detached youth workers from the Netherlands and UK helped Maltese youth workers gain confidence in approaching young people and broke down some of the barriers that were impeding their engagement with the young people.

The more experienced outreach and detached youth workers are currently serving as mentors

to recently appointed youth workers as the agency seeks to widen the pool of professionals available to carry out this kind of youth work provision.

Future training will include looking at case-studies and role plays with youth workers presenting situations that they have come across to the team and inviting alternate responses.

For those taking on a more supervisory role training may also involve job-shadowing or more specialised training overseas.

Given the importance of safe practice (with regard to both youth workers and young people) and the constantly evolving character of young people's needs, there is a commitment to the review and renewal of service provision. This should include developing worker capacities to respond to national exigencies, social change and the demands of young people and their communities. Central to this is the provision of an appropriate framework of supervision and training for the same.

SUPERVISION

Supervision is taken to be the most effective and consistent means of training and development of practitioners. It provides a learning experience in that youth workers are expected to reflect on and critique their practice and be open to being questioned about the judgements they make and exploring alternative responses.

Supervision is:

- a space where youth workers are able to put forward any challenges or difficulties encountered in their practice, where good practice can be affirmed and where they can voice concerns;
- not a choice but a must. It is an important central element of professional practice and its development;
- a means of quality assurance;
- a critical tool that underpins the safeguarding of both practitioners and young people.

As such, supervision is a foundational means to assess the quality of judgement being made by the practitioner about and with young people. Thus the process of supervision is based on sound youth work principles.

Supervisors, working with and alongside supervisees, can identify areas and skills that need developing and situations where interventions from other professionals may be required or appropriate.

Youth workers operate within the agency structure and supervision is a central means of ensuring that the youth worker understands where the potential and limits of their responsibility and activity lie.

The regular supervision of managers of detached youth workers has been provided by the Senior Manager overseeing the implementation of the service and the CEO. This has included discussions related to the progress of the project, exploring potential and actual difficulties and challenges encountered and the identification of targets and indicators.

Regular group supervision with staff was held every two to three weeks, ensuring that any issues that arose were able to be addressed.

Youth workers were invited to reflect on:

- interactions with the young people;
- incidents that may have taken place and responses to them;

They were also able to raise concerns and ethical dilemmas, for example issues relating to:

- data protection;
- substance misuse;
- health and safety;
- personal well-being;
- educational advice and guidance.

Supervision meetings involving all the youth workers are planned to take place every six weeks to two months mainly aimed at evaluating how the service is developing and as an opportunity for training and reflection. Individual and group supervision meetings are recorded

and targets and indicators set are followed up on from one meeting to the next.

There has been some thought given to developing peer supervision, which might be facilitated by skype contact. This would provide another potential means for youth workers to assess, examine and share practice. Supervision is central to our commitment to the on-going enthusiasm to share, explore, interrogate and learn from shared practitioner experience and insight. As such supervision training is being embedded in the service as part of its professional ethos.

Although supervision should meet a range of professional practice needs/ requirements, it is understood, at base, as a quality assurance tool and a mechanism to ensure the ongoing/ continuous development, improvement, appropriateness, relevance and effectiveness of service design and delivery.

ONGOING DEVELOPMENT OF PRACTICE AND DELIVERY OF SERVICES

Initially (in October 2014) four youth workers were assigned to providing an outreach and detached youth work service. By May 2015 two more workers were involved in the project. In August 2015 there were 10 detached and outreach workers deployed in a number of locations. This number grew to 21 by February 2016.

This necessitated a restructuring of the service provision with three persons taking on an intermediary role between the senior manager and the youth workers providing the service. These coordinators serve as a reference point for the youth workers as well as the Senior Manager. Team meetings are planned to take place every six weeks. Communication between the coordinators and senior managers happens on a daily basis and individual supervision sessions are scheduled to take place once a month. Youth workers who are employees of the agency undergo a performance appraisal, which is conducted every quarter and contribute towards setting their own targets, so enhancing capacities in terms of professional judgement making. Three teams of youth workers have been established and a coordinator identified for each. The coordinator is partly responsible for supporting the youth workers in collaboration with the Senior Manager. Log sheets need to be filled in for each practice session and as of

February 2016 this also includes a pre-session goal setting exercise as well as post-session reporting and reflection.

Communication between coordinators and the Senior Manager is ongoing and the coordinators are encouraged to raise specific issues encountered both in terms of human resource management as well as in terms of professional practice. Formal monthly meetings are also held between the coordinator and senior manager as the supervisor and line manager. Coordinators also follow-up with the individual youth workers in their team and raise any issues with the line manager.

It is intended to continue to ensure that more experienced practitioners support less experienced workers as they build confidence in their ability to engage with young people in unstructured (or informally structured) environments. Given that most youth workers are not full-time employees of the agency, and only provide a few hours of service a week, team meetings are generally only possible every two to three months.

The idea of potentially having an online platform to which log-sheets could be uploaded and shared among all youth workers might be one way of enabling better communication between team members.

Motivation and morale are maintained through the celebration of successes and the recognition of learning, as well as by encouraging youth workers to take initiative and implement innovative activities and ideas. Managers are encouraged to ask and respond to reflective questioning of issues raised by youth workers. These practitioners are urged to reflect on their own practice and to come up with a range of potential and actual practice responses. This process enables youth workers to grow more confident as they maintain and build their capacity to make professional judgements.

There is a commitment to creating spaces through which the youth workers can provide feedback on their experiences in service provision. This is essential to determine needs, cost-effectiveness and impact of service provision among others. The ambition to share good practice is part of any responsible, professional, educational or welfare oriented service, perhaps particularly those extended to young people.

While we are still at the piloting stage of establishing the service and continue to build the capacity of the agency and its youth workers, a central ambition of the agency is to be able to promote, encourage and learn from shared practice. Supervision is central to the above. This is facilitated by records of practice as well as feedback provided by the coordinators.

THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF DETACHED AND OUTREACH WORK IN MALTA

The following issues have been identified as central to the continued development of detached and outreach work:

- Obtaining funding that would ensure the sustainability and development of the service;
- Identifying potential training opportunities for both managers and youth workers;
- Increasing the number of hours of service in any given locality for the work to be more effective and consistent;
- Consolidating current service provision and structures before expanding further;
- Ideally moving from part-time, temporary staff to more full-time staff.
- Develop supervision skills and ensure that youth workers receive adequate support and guidance;
- Better scheduling of supervision sessions;
- More time dedicated to training whether internal or external;
- Improved monitoring of service provision;
- Identification, development and dissemination of good practices.

The main challenges for detached and outreach work in Malta include:

- Overcoming initial fears that youth workers may have in undertaking this type of work.
- Establishing, alongside young people, ways of meeting client wants and needs, designing and delivering appropriate responses, activities and projects.
- Ensuring that adequate structures and guidelines are in place to ensure safety of both youth worker and young person.
- Finding ways to develop the ability of the youth worker to make professional judgements that are sound and based on recognised youth work principles.

In the last phase of the pilot project, both in terms of worker experience and independent evaluation, the development of detached and outreach youth provision has been impressive. Worker skill and confidence has exceeded what might be reasonably expected of a service very much starting from scratch.

The service in Valletta, where the numbers of young people can be in the hundreds, generally requires that three or four youth workers are present. For the services in Cottonera and the South, two youth workers are generally sufficient on any one shift, unless an activity is being planned. In the latter situation additional staff are generally assigned. Ideally service provision would take place at least three to four times a week in any one locality but this is very much dependent on the financial and human resources available to the agency.

The above notwithstanding, future practice will continue to monitor service delivery and will look to continually review staff/young people ratios as well as the most practical and efficient use of staff contact hours.

CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (CSCD) - ROMANIA AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF DETACHED YOUTH WORK

The role of CSCD was to pilot detached work methodologies in Romania, working in rural communities. CSCD is exploring and adapting tools and approaches presented by partners working mainly in urban areas to rural contexts. This is a challenging and exciting initiative.

CSCD looks to develop and implement educational activities, using cultural and arts based approaches in order to promote forms of community development. This contributes to the social and personal development and capacity building opportunities of the organisation's main target group – young people living in relatively isolated rural areas. The organisation works with young people who, because of their situation or context, might suffer comparative disadvantage in terms of accessing social, educational and developmental opportunities.

Romania is a relatively underdeveloped in terms of youth work; resources for practice are as such not universally available and the network of youth centres is comparatively limited. Given this, non-formal learning and developmental responses to young people are comparatively restricted. This being the case CSCD is determined to contribute to the development of practice in this field throughout the national context and, given the situation, considers detached youth work a very important approach for developing youth work in Romania. However, CSCD's main focus, working with and in rural communities, means that the organisation needs to be innovative in terms of the delivery and adoption of detached youth work approaches, methods and tools that have, in the main, evolved and been delivered in urban contexts. The flexible nature of this type of response allows CSCD to provide a youth work response in situations where there would otherwise be no access at all.

Before the project commenced CSCD was working with young people in 6 rural communities in Dolj County, Romania. These localities had similar conditions for youth work. CSCD, at the beginning unwittingly, used outreach and detached youth work approaches, techniques,

methods and tools to reach and contact young people.

The motivation for participation in the project was in this context thus twofold:

- to learn and consciously apply detached youth work approaches, using supervision, monitoring, evaluation and quality control tools;
- to contribute to the understanding of detached and outreach youth work in other countries by bringing to the attention of the partners the local and specific context of youth work in Romania in rural communities;
- to contribute to the building of capacity and knowhow about youth work in Romania.

For CSCD because of the lack of structure in terms of youth work within the national context, the organisation saw that it had something to contribute, given it can be experimental and so potentially innovative in developing responses. For instance, the specific focus of CSCD being on rural communities offered the opportunity to explore possibilities and adapting methods and approaches to detached youth work, looking to produce exciting and inventive outcomes. The latter have the potential to inform further work in Romania but also other national contexts.

CSCD decided to pilot detached youth work in two rural communities. One had no devoted facilities for young people; the other has a small centre, fairly limited in terms of usage and scope for development. As such, detached youth work in these locations provided options to young people who otherwise would not have opportunities to access such services. These locations shared similar conditions for youth work to other areas CSCD had worked in.

The two communities chosen for the pilot project (Giubega and Pielesti, specifically Campeni village) had been implementing several initiatives. CSCD has an office in the Giubega commune and from there the organisation has developed a participation scheme for the young people in the area.

DETACHED AND OUTREACH YOUTH WORK IN ROMANIA

For CSCD detached youth work is a process of working with young people in largely informal locations they are usually familiar with; it takes place where young people choose, where they are both in space and time – when they are available to participate in activities for their development from childhood to maturity.

The practice is centred on the needs of young people via the establishment of constructive association and partnership between them and youth workers. This collaboration needs to be based on trust and a clear development plan generated alongside young people.

Youth centres and dedicated youth facilities are rare in rural areas of Romania. However CSCD recognise that designated youth facilities usually need to be more formal and regulated than services provided in less prescribed, more public environments that might not be understood as essentially youth oriented. From the experience of working with young people CSCD understood their interest in participating in youth activities in centres, therefore where a centre exists (as the case in Pielesti) it makes sense to use the centre. However, as many young people are involved in other (often family related) activities or live in areas where no such facilities exist, outreach and/or detached activities are needed. In the communities where CSCD has focused its youth work, detached youth work is the only means to deliver practice because it can be offered almost anywhere and not necessarily in one designated space or situation.

Without the infrastructure for youth work, CSCD have been able to combine detached and outreach work, Starting with an outreach approach the organisation has been moving closer to delivering detached services, developing monitoring and supervision activities.

CSCD aspire to invest more in the sustainability of the project and start working on delivering the services in partnership with the authorities ultimately looking for the services to be transferred to the authorities. The organisation continues

to make efforts to attract and include more young people to use their services while continuing to improve the youth led approach.

THE PRINCIPLES AND VALUES THAT UNDERPIN PRACTICE

CSCD bases its approach on the respect for young people, their independence and voluntary involvement (promoting young people's right to decide on their actions). The organisation also looks to promote social welfare and security of beneficiaries.

Youth workers are transparent and accountable to the young people. CSCD are conscious of the boundaries between the professional and personal life of youth workers, although they might be difficult to establish, as some of the youth workers are part of the same small communities as the young people. Activities with young people are based on planned meetings, programmed by the young people themselves. Venues include school, a bar, a park or (rarely) in a space provided by the town hall. The separation between the professional and personal life of youth workers is facilitated by the understanding that these meetings need to be premised on professional attitudes.

For CSCD ethical practice is founded on respecting confidentiality and having a clear set of working principles when working with, for and alongside young people. The organisation looks for the leadership of its youth workers to ultimately be transferred to young people. From having the activities mainly led by youth workers, CSCD have been moving towards developing youth led activities. The organisation looks to work directly with young people where they are and not obliging them to come to spaces they might not feel familiar with or that undermines their eagerness to share their experiences. CSCD sees this way of working as conducive to facilitating young people to take a lead in activities and processes.

CSCD look to be able to respond to young people's needs and make services sustainable by having them delivered on partnership basis with the authorities.

FOUNDATION RESEARCH

Before the start of the pilot project, documentation for the background study helped CSCD by facilitating a clear perspective of potential challenges. The support offered by the authorities did not come from the beginning and it took the organisation a while to develop the partnership structure.

Prior to piloting detached youth work there was consultation with relevant stakeholders, deploying semi-focused interviews – using open questions, focused on specific, well defined issues. The interviews provided the opportunity to consult the local community, authorities, volunteer youth workers and young people.

The following areas were investigated:

- Youth needs in the community;
- Existing youth services;
- The opportunity to develop new youth services.

Additional questions were added during the interviews relating to the opportunity to have services developed on partnership basis between the NGOs and the governmental structures.

The interviews were conducted in November and December 2014 in the two communities: Giubega and Pielesti. Findings were identified in December and January 2015 for the research report.

To establish the needs of young people in the two communities a qualitative study design was applied. As the study looked to identify the level of youth services in the two communities and how any potential provision might work with and/or enhance these services, it was decided that a qualitative research approach was helpful in terms of highlighting and focusing on and expanding on details and nuances when conducting the interviews. The qualitative approach was also much more applicable given the small number of research respondents - six in each of the communities, which included two heads of the educational institutions, two representatives of the authorities and two youth workers.

The second research method was a documentation study. The advantages of using this method are;

- transparency;
- results that can be easily verified;
- it is a non-reactive method (it reanalyses data that was registered).

Such data can be readily structured and integrated into research conclusions.

The researchers used this method to analyse the normative and legislative framework – documenting the history and situation of youth work in Romania, as well as the profile of the two communities, using mainly secondary sources (literature, legislation, action plans, governmental programmes, resolutions and decisions).

The use of a research diary proved a valuable tool as it enabled researchers to capture observations, informal conversations and personal opinions. It was especially used when visiting the respective communities. Observation was a secondary research method presented in research diaries that were subject to documentary study.

A needs assessment was carried out, based on interviews and the documentary study. The results were as follows;

- there is a lack of coherence when it comes to youth policies;
- there is a lack of professionalization of youth work;
- the social and economic situation of young people, principally the lack of job opportunities and long term unemployment- this is one of the main problems of young people in the two communities;
- there is lack of housing – most young people are obliged to live with their families even after having a family of their own;
- even if some young people had been able to access opportunities offered by the Romanian state to continue their

studies there are financial challenges in terms of the continuance of their studies after completing compulsory education (at age 10). This was found to be especially the case for the young people from Giubega (the closest high-school being 12 km away);

- young people are pessimistic about current prospects and future opportunities; they express disappointment with the current system, and are often convinced that no future is possible for them in the villages. Often they see the only solution to be to leave the country and to go and work abroad;
- it was seen that the authorities would not offer any opportunities for young people to be involved with community life, while representatives of the authorities identified some opportunities that they are offering to young people (for example, access to libraries, membership in the traditional dance clubs or football clubs) but these were seen as ineffective and inappropriate in terms of the needs and interests of young people;
- none of the respondents identified alcohol consumption, drug use or any other vices as being significant problems among young people;
- there was generally a consensus that there is a great need for detached youth work.

In order to assess progress, outcome and impact of detached work practice CSCD implemented a flexible reporting method. Youth workers were asked to send to the management team brief reports describing their interactions with young people. Youth work logs – in the form of a shared (by Google Drive) Excel file - was implemented in order to record the number of young people being worked with.

DEVELOPING AIMS AND EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF DETACHED PRACTICE

Aims were established based on the background research and in consultation with the youth workers. The sharing of ideas and perspectives was followed by an analysis of what was realistically possible in the two communities. Aims were revisited and redefined throughout the process, according to results of work.

As established by the needs assessment, the most pressing needs of young people in the communities are related to social and economic issues, especially the fact or prospect of unemployment. The latter is mostly not the result of young people's lack of skills, it is mainly related to the lack of opportunities

The youth work interventions CSCD are able to offer are not sufficient to tackle many of the more severe economic problems young people might experience. However, it is an ambition of the organisation to establish youth work responses that will facilitate independent action on the part of young people, which would include civic participation, in order to address such issues more adequately.

STAFF SELECTION/ RECRUITMENT

The youth workers involved in implementing activities were recruited on the basis of their experience in working with young people and their availability to work in the rural communities. They were selected from among volunteers already associated with CSCD.

Selected youth workers were interviewed before starting the work and thereafter informed and trained in detached youth work practice. Selection criteria included:

- Experience in working with young people;
- Availability to work in the rural areas (to be able to commute, often several times a week).

GUIDELINES FOR PRACTICE

Good practice has been shared between project partners via electronic contact and the motilities. CSCD ensured participation of both managers and youth workers to these motilities. Within the project good practices are identified and shared by the annual summary of the reports of activities through the year.

Good practices developed in other contexts are identified by the managers (who are also youth policy researchers) and shared with youth workers through regular communication.

CSCD assesses the performance of youth workers based on their reports and activity logs (that are shared between the team members in a Google Drive document) but also on constant communication. The annual summary of reports can be understood as the 'official' evaluation of youth workers. This includes;

- a review of performance criteria;
- outcomes delivered;
- approaches to working with and interaction with young people;
- feedback from young people;
- success in maintaining the number of young participants;
- activities delivered.

The organisation also convenes regular team conferences (face-to-face or by Skype).

TRAINING

Managers within the project have been studying materials on youth work and detached youth work provided by project partners. Issues, including ethical dilemmas concerning the work, both in relation to aims and objectives (planned outcomes) and the implementation of the project have been discussed with other senior volunteers and youth leaders working with CSCD.

Practitioners (youth workers) and managers participated in the mobility in Rotterdam where they were introduced to good practices in detached youth work and they received guidance in a more informal or non-formal way, during project meetings both face-to-face and online based on the materials managers studied. As part of the evaluation visit CSCD,

working alongside the YMCA George Williams College in November 2015, organised an initial, introductory training session looking at detached and outreach practice.

CSCD are looking to produce a manual of detached youth work as an outcome of the project. This will be generated as part of their intellectual outputs in the project and will underpin the deployment and delivery of non-formal education.

It is foreseen that future training on applied youth work, including outreach and detached approaches, will be developed based on the experience and data generated by this project. Within CSCD there is a constant effort to keep communication effective. Training opportunities for youth workers, both in Romania and abroad, have been offered and taken up. The organisation is regularly recruiting new volunteers with fresh motivation into the team. This situation and environment has motivated the youth workers and kept morale high

CSCD assess the needs of youth workers for support via training and constant communication. This was supplemented by informal contact outside project discussions. There is also appreciable ongoing assessment of needs based on the analysis of youth workers reports and logs.

SUPERVISION

CSCD is committed to supervision, monitoring, evaluation and quality control of its work with young people. However, currently supervision is not formalised and separated from monitoring and internal evaluation of the youth work. Quality assurance and practitioner accountability is reliant on keeping channels of communication open. This together with youth workers reports and logs, contributing to practice development, by identifying good/successful practice and lessons learned.

The investment of trust by young people has been substantially motivated by well structured practices and the assurance that practitioners were supported and backed up if needed.

However, CSCD is conscious of the need to develop supervision practice as part of organisational, management and practitioner development.

Peer supervision encompasses exchanges of ideas and discussion about a range of issues. This includes managers from the project and other senior youth workers and trainers working with CSCD. It is hoped that in the future CSCD can implicate robust supervision procedures into its practice in order to assess progress, outcome and impact of youth work done. However, in the interim the organisation has implemented a flexible reporting method that also allows for supervision to be introduced. Youth workers were asked to send short reports to the management team describing their interactions with the young people. The latter were supplemented by youth work logs in the form of a shared (by Google Drive) Excel file. This facilitated register and record of the number of young people being worked with.

The reporting system, although simple, has been appropriate in terms of the scope of the work thus far undertaken in the two communities. It was thought that initially, in order to assess progress, outcome and impact of youth work, a straightforward and flexible reporting method was desirable. This practice, alongside the completion of youth work logs, is envisaged to continue after the end of the project.

Annually a summary of meetings and reports of other activities will be compiled by managers and an evaluation of training requirements for youth workers undertaken. An assessment of the needs of young people will also be made based on this summary of reports.

Although current procedures, alongside training, have led to a consciousness of accountability and also the need for practitioners to develop better working relations both with the clients and the other stakeholders in the community, as part of 'best practice' ambitions and user safeguarding, CSCD will look to gradually introduce a vigorous system of supervision. The YMCA George Williams College has given its commitment to be as supportive of this process as possible.

ONGOING DEVELOPMENT OF PRACTICE AND DELIVERY OF SERVICES

An outcome of contacting and interacting with more than 40 young people was established via detached youth work practice.

In the community where the youth work was generating faster there were better results from these meetings. In Giubega two public action campaigns were organised by young people in order to exercise their independence and influence over their community. This included arranging to use the park next to the school in June 2015 and a charity campaign for Christmas 2015.

Short term measurable outcomes include the results meetings and small activities with young people, these included:

- Encouraging forms of self-reliance;
- Raising self-trust/confidence;
- Developing greater levels of self-respect;
- Building social networking skills.

A presentation of the aims was made to the young people, and youth workers were instructed to present their aims and reasons during all the meetings with young people, in order to ensure the transparency of the process and to ensure voluntary participation of young people. This addressed a number of ethical considerations.

According to the report presented to the coordination partner, 53 working days had been reported for the management (including the development of mentorship and supervision procedures, background analysis, partnership development and the elaboration of the manuals for the practitioners). The 3 youth workers involved with the piloting phase have been working for 39 days, the ratio per young person involved with the project has been 1.325 days. Youth work services provided equates to 0.975 days.

Given the relative lack of experience and specific training of youth workers in Romania, we would anticipate that a higher ratio of staff/beneficiary will be needed in this context. A higher number of hours is also likely to be eventually needed for supervision, as youth workers need constant guidelines, and to take part in step-by-step presentation of their work (face-to-face or by Skype - conversation, not writing) in order to have direct feedback to questions and concerns.

The mechanism to analyse on-going or new needs, and to modify activity accordingly to these needs, is the reports from youth workers, logs and feedback from supervision and management for the activity of youth workers. Annually a summary of meetings and other activities reports will be made by managers and an evaluation of training needs for youth workers and activity needs for young people will be made based on a summary of this data.

The youth group is currently planning its 3rd campaign. The previous campaigns have been promoted locally and at the European level in different events. The other communities became highly interested in the services we provided and as such CSCD are ambitious to upscale the services to other communities.

So far, the involvement in the community has been rather sequential or project based. Piloting detached youth work services had been CSCD's first opportunity to run a long term initiative. The organisation has been able to work with the schools in 3 communities. Services were constantly supplemented by training processes, with the aim of professionalizing practice and putting in place a system of monitoring and supervision.

THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF DETACHED AND OUTREACH WORK IN ROMANIA

The youth workers are aiming to transform the services into permanent services to be delivered in the community context as well as to upscaling the services to other communities around Giubega.

A further ambition is to have the services transferred to the local authorities, perhaps run on partnership basis with the local authorities. CSCD would hope to pilot a prolonged project and have more time and resources to allow for the development of the services in the other communities.

CSCD hope to develop a detached oriented programme (rather than another project) and look for an operational grant for long term activity (more than 12 months/project). Partnership with the County Youth and Sport Office – an institution under the Ministry for Sport and Youth - can be initiated, but the budget of this institution is very limited. The main challenge that faces CSCD in the delivery of youth work is finance. Constant fundraising efforts are made by the managers. There is also a need for more structure in the organisational practice, to allow for work transfer in the case of lack of availability of the managers or youth workers.

Background analysis has shown that alcohol consumption, criminality and drug use are not problems that the young people CSCD currently work with face. However, poverty is a constant threat to the welfare of young people. By its nature youth work is not directly targeting social problems, as it differs from social work. However, our constant concern is encouraging young people to be independent and able to make informed decisions about their career and to follow their life objectives.

CSCD aspires to implement a long term programme for detached/outreach youth work and to contribute to the development of active participation, encouraging constructively critical young citizens in Romania's rural areas.





The following section reflects on the findings undertaken in Malta and Romania. These include information from a range of stakeholders, impressions gleaned from formal and informal conversations, practice observations and training undertaken during the evaluation visits.

ROMANIA

It should be understood from the outset that this project is relatively new in a context where the concept of detached youth work in particular, and youth work in general is not as widely understood comparative to other national and regional locations. This is not a commentary on the intellectual capacity or paucity of concern for the welfare of young people locally or nationally. It is the competition of needs and the scarcity of resources that necessarily dictates that the expansion of expertise in youth work is relatively limited.

That said, eagerness for learning and commitment to deepening practice was evident throughout the visit. The workers involved are clearly punching far above their weight in terms of their dedication to bettering the service they offer. This is both commendable and moving. Two sites of practice were visited. Discussions were had with volunteers, young people, community members and other relevant local stakeholders.

The projects were village based in rural districts. Demographic, social and climatic considerations have shaped a response that is more akin to traditional ideas related to outreach responses than archetypal detached provision; the practice is not set in what Marc Augé called 'non-spaces' but does make use of what might be thought of as 'third place' venues (Putnam, 1995, 2000).

Local young people meet at arranged times with practitioners at designated venues, which have differed over time and according to local circumstances.

However, the response to young people, given the difficulties with resourcing

any kind of conventional centre-based practice, has been attuned to call on young people's ideas and ingenuity, making use of locations and the input of workers.

This has created an exciting collaborative atmosphere and a sense of healthy interdependence between workers and young people that is developmental in terms of young people's transition from childhood to active, participative citizens.

The emphasis appears to be on forms of open learning, but this is essentially of a social nature, wherein care and welfare are both central concerns and motivating factors in terms of wider developmental issues and healthy psychological maturation.

For example, one young person said:

"We come because we can socialise and it is fun. But also we talk about things and learn from each other."

When asked if this learning was about advice, information or school related subjects the person replied:

"Yes, about all those things. But mostly we talk because we know the people who organise this will listen. We look forward to being with them and each other."

How this approach can enhance the sense of self in relation to others should not be underestimated.

The work has what might be understood as non-formal elements, but there is a sense of purpose, direction and vision from the young people involved. This generates a definite but supple structure, resonant of what Illich (1972) called 'eutrapelia' - graceful, but determined and focussed, playfulness. This amounts to the building of a creative, welcoming, fun and exciting environment, and an ethos that promotes an awareness of the potential for change via personal ambition and collective action.

This said, it seems likely that neither workers nor young people are fully conscious of what they are together creating. The project appears to have evolved out of very straightforward enthusiasm and commitment.

For instance a volunteer stated:

"We want to give young people something positive to do in a safe place."

Another declared:

"It's fun for them to be with each other and socialise."

A young person put it even more succinctly:

"It's somewhere to go. It is better than doing nothing! We like what we do together. Not everyone comes all the time, but that does not matter. I think it makes a break from just thinking about school."

This sounds pretty simplistic and perfunctory, but rationally it is where interaction starts.

It is debatable if those involved in organising the project should or want to take advantage of the relatively complex and innovative response they appear to have generated. Thus far it has been successful in that young people are participating and playing an appreciable part in producing a provision that meets a range of needs and wants as they define them. However, the prospect of this project becoming something of an innovative model of practice is clearly attractive.

This said, such an ambition would mean a commitment to devoted research (that logically would be carried out in conjunction with the young people concerned).

MALTA

Three locations were visited in Malta. This included an urban residential area, a city centre provision and practice encompassing a number of municipal neighbourhoods.

The work has now been developing (from scratch) over the better part of two years and has included a deal of experimentation and analysis of the same. This says much in terms of the care taken to foster professional judgement and build cogent strategies, attuned to different area characteristics and needs.

The practitioners working within the detached/outreach strategy have been provided with support and training and there was a clear sense of determination, good humour and good will on the part of face-to-face practitioners.

The staff demonstrated good generic youth work knowledge, attitudes and awareness. Those involved had clearly thought hard and continue to evolve definite purpose and direction in terms of the process outcomes. Lack of direction of course risks disorientation and this, alongside a lack confidence, threatens to create a cycle that can potentially impact morale and so performance.

Young people, almost unfailingly, expressed a positive attitude with regard to detached youth workers and their role. This could be a very general consideration:

"They are around on certain days, so some kids might feel safer because of that. You can ask them about stuff and they try to help. Yes, I think it's a good idea!"

However, other young people noted more specific benefits:

"She [nodding towards one worker] has asked me if there's anything I want to do. I couldn't think of anything, but I did think why couldn't I think of anything [laughs]"

Malta, even in its urban environments, does not have the same character as some, seemingly similar, European contexts, although appreciable numbers of young people choose to socialise on the streets and in the cafes of Valletta. While young people of Valletta do share some of the same issues with their age peers in places like Paris, London and Rotterdam, in the main, the challenges presented about concerns such as drugs, poor housing and poverty are not as widespread or profound. However, this does not make detached work in Malta relatively 'easy' or straightforward. In fact, that young people in Malta do not, for the most part, experience the kinds of social deprivation or the extent of desperation many of their counterparts in say Glasgow or Amsterdam might struggle with, presents detached youth workers in Malta with a different, perhaps more onerous task.

Clear and critical needs create a two-way street in youth work, perhaps in particular detached practice. Young people are often likely in such circumstances to be actively seeking out any assistance to alleviate their situation. At the same time, young people in crucial or dire social circumstances have a visibility that others lack.

Added to this detached and outreach practice has traditionally looked to reach out to young people who will not or cannot access other youth provision/facilities. Some young people in Malta fall into such a group.

For instance one young person commented:
"I don't know what happens in youth clubs. Sport and things like that? It doesn't interest me. I just come out to see my friends."

Other young people use leisure facilities, some specifically for young people, but also choose to socialise outside such provision, not unusually this includes meeting on the street, in and around public places and 'third places' such as McDonalds.

All this means that detached youth work in Malta presents very specific and unique issues for practitioners.

As might be expected, as a result of this situation detached and outreach practice will require a bespoke set of approaches and attitudes in the Maltese context. As things stand, this is a work in progress, however discussions with workers developing detached and outreach approaches and training events delivered during the visit revealed a growing

consciousness of this state of affairs. In short, there was a healthy realisation that Malta cannot simply look to wholly adopt practices that have developed (or been habituated) elsewhere but borrow and adapt practice in order to build a response to detached and outreach practice that fits cultural and contextual wants and needs.

This recognition was exciting, interesting but above all truly refreshing as it allows practitioners in Malta to not only extend the understanding and definition of detached and outreach strategies, but effectively generate a laboratory of practice.

However, the need to constantly and consistently review direction is a necessary part of practice in evolving youth contexts (such as Malta). This obviates identifying goals/outcomes (in order to know where one is going, one needs a destination to make for). With this in mind the following section, that could be used as a model of practice/case study, has been included. It is not expected this will be put in place without discussion, alteration or adaptation. It is provided as a starting point to provide practitioners with the means to orientate and justify their practice.



PREAMBLE

This Outreach and Detached Youth Work Policy Guidelines document has been produced as one suggested means to review and evaluate practice. Although it does not answer all potential questions, it is recommended as a framework for good practice.

The document has been written by Dr Brian Belton, of the YMCA George Williams College, based on his observations, training and conversations with youth workers, youth work managers and detached youth workers worldwide over a number of decades.

Detached youth work has been associated with particular demands and worker related anxieties, but in the main the approach is little more than operating in a different context than say agency or club based work. This document seeks to be of help to those who want to understand more about and develop their practice, while contributing to the continued development of detached and outreach work, perhaps with relevant adaptations and contextualization, throughout Europe and the world.

INTRODUCTION

Why Outreach and Detached Youth Work?

The part that outreach and detached youth workers play within wider service provision is varied and tends to alter in the face of personal, social and national issues; they engage with young people in a range of settings, situations, environments and contexts and deliver a variety of responses, projects and services to achieve planned outcomes. A good deal of work detached practitioners undertake takes place with young people who are not using other services or projects, but it can also encompass people who use other provision to some extent. Outreach and detached workers make contact with individuals and groups of young people who choose or are obliged to meet and socialise in

public places (the street, parks, shopping malls etc). Sometimes they might be taken by some to be threatening, mischievous or simply a nuisance

The aims, purposes and goals of outreach and detached youth work are not framed to censure young people, neither do they look to excuse or condone potential or actual negative or 'risky' behaviour.

POLICY CONTEXT

Outreach and detached youth workers endeavour to build constructive associations with young people, wherein they might question and explore young people's behaviour, understanding and attitudes and offer opportunities to promote personal and social learning. This approach demands patience, a thoughtful approach and considered action.

Funding requirements, public and governmental expectations necessitate that outreach and detached youth workers need to apply their skills to a more structured and clearly productive approach. Outreach and detached youth work can be deployed to increase access to mainstream youth services in relatively disadvantaged districts, but also areas where youth work is under developed and/or lacks a profile. Through outreach and detached youth work specific targeting of issues is possible and this work can be more focused than say by traditional youth work services. Young people who could be at risk of social exclusion, marginalisation or isolation can be swiftly engaged with, while those who might experience combinations of barriers to learning can be identified and worked with.

The purpose of this policy is to provide clarification of policy context as well as working to establish procedures and guidelines for best practice. It is aimed at:

- i) All youth work staff that deliver face-to-face outreach and detached work with young people;

- ii) Those who manage and supervise outreach and detached youth workers;
- iii) Volunteers;
- iv) Senior managers;
- v) Partner agencies;
- vi) Young people.

Outreach Youth Work

Outreach and detached youth work takes place within the strategic contexts that usually relate to a number of underpinning documents and these should be considered.

For example, in Malta, Aġenzija Żgħażaġh grouped strands of implicit and explicit relevant policy outcomes into 4 priority target areas:

- a. Enjoying learning and achieving.
- b. Being healthy and living in safety.
- c. Participation and making a positive contribution.
- d. Promoting economic and environmental wellbeing.

In addition, to enable the consideration of quality assurance targets, Aġenzija Żgħażaġh delivery plans also include targets under the heading 'management and assurance'.

Detached Youth Work

Definitions of Outreach and Detached Youth Work:

Outreach and detached youth work are often conflated but because they might be bracketed under the term 'street-work' they are not exactly the same response to identical client groups. This said, outreach and detached responses can be complementary. As such and for instance Aġenzija Żgħażaġh has generated a clear statement about these terms and their potential to influence the lives of young people in Malta. The aims of this approach are geared to providing information for and to young

people about the youth services offered by Aġenzija Żgħażaġh and other agencies/providers.

Outreach work not unusually takes place with young people on the streets, in cafes and parks etc. Commonly this is understood as their 'own territory' although public places are subject to a range of legislation, including manifestations of trespass, that make this view something of a false impression. Territory that is common, both to youth and adults, cannot be understood as belonging to or somehow the province of young people alone. Indeed, devoted youth spaces are much more 'their territory' than areas where they might become subject to the attention of security staff, home owners, the police or social services.

However, outreach approaches can also be undertaken in devoted youth spaces, for instance schools and in a variety of other settings used by young people.

Outreach workers make links, provide information, invite and point young people to be involved in specific projects, services or activities. These can include (for example) drugs awareness projects, youth centres, outdoor or adventure activities and so on.

This approach can be undertaken as an extension of a project/service say to increase awareness about or use of services or as a conduit to promote informed choice about the taking up of services or being involved in projects. Outreach work may also be used as a means of consulting young people.

This involves contact with young people in the places they choose to congregate. Youth workers make contact with and work in environments such as street corners, play grounds, parks, amusement arcades, shopping precincts, cafes etc.

Detached work programmes take their lead from young people and work with them to analyse what their wants and needs might be, and establish goals for themselves. The work can support young people who might want to undertake some kind of action or activity. This is often said to be a process that starts from where young people are 'at' however it is hard

to see how it could start from where they are not 'at'. However consideration of personal, cultural and group ambitions, values, attitudes and knowledge is implicit in the work. Indeed, it is difficult to say how any positive activity could take place, on a relatively inclusive basis, if this was not the case.

The nature of detached youth work might be understood as purposeful interaction between practitioners and young people; it deploys a range of youth work methods.

HOW OUTREACH AND DETACHED YOUTH WORK MIGHT BE SIMILAR

As clearly implied above, there are differences between outreach and detached youth work, but youth work (generally) tends to encompass the achievement of learning outcomes for the young people (which relate to the broader policy framework of Aġenzija Żgħażaġh). At the same time many youth workers (like all those in Malta) for the most part, make contact at times and in places that are chosen by young people (it is thought to be 'voluntary').

The purposes of youth work generally is not to make young people invisible (not seen or heard) but to enhance their social profile and participation in the life of their localities and broader contexts. Outreach and detached youth workers have a responsibility to agree to the style and content of the programme with young people.

OUTCOMES OF OUTREACH AND DETACHED YOUTH WORK

Youth workers alone are not likely to be the only influence on the decisions and lives of young people or the single most significant factor in terms of young people determining the direction of their lives. There are, of course, many other factors that have both positive and negative impact on the decisions young people make. That said, youth work can provide encouragement, direction and stimulation. It can play a role in prevention of harm and risk factors, and promote educational considerations such as the attainment of basic qualifications and life skills.

As such, it is possible to determine an indicative outcomes framework such as that set out below and to build on and elaborate the same:

	Individual Outcomes	Social Outcomes
Harder Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved educational/ learning attainment • gaining accredited qualifications • increased independence • reduced risky behaviours • improved health 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • employment • remaining in school or community • lowered health risk • safer community
Softer Indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • self-belief • self-awareness • finding a voice • positive peer group support • reduced bullying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quality in family life and relationships • improved wellbeing • making a social contribution • community cohesion

The above are quite general outcomes and they need thought and imagination to interpret and analyse so that they might be made use of. But for instance, a worker was told by a young person that they are concerned of their 'bad breath' because it made them a 'bad kisser'. This led to the worker and the young person doing some collaborative 'phone research' relating to dental health.

So the worker addressed the following so that the younger person concerned:

- improved educational/learning attainment – they learnt about dental hygiene
- increased independence – they could look after themselves better and take on personal research
- they reduced their risk of dental disease
- they improved their health
- they became more self-aware
- they improved their well-being

Another example of an opportunity to address one of the above indicators was when a worker brought three 'garden pickers' and some plastic bags along to a group, suggesting that they had a competition to see who might pick up the most litter from the playground where the group met. They worked in pairs (one picking, the other holding the bag).

The worker had arranged for the winning pair to get a free drink of their choice from a café situated close to the playground. In the end the owner of the café gave all three teams a drink of their choice because they had done such a great job. Here the worker, alongside the young people:

- increased independence
- developed self-awareness
- promoted positive peer support (teamwork)
- promoted community cohesion
- made the community safer (in terms of the dangers of litter)
- made a social contribution

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

If (as is the case with Aġenzija Żgħażaġh) an agency has a number of youth work outreach/detached teams, each team can work to the general policy and aims of the agency, while drawing key targets for the year from this. This can be used to generate a plan for detached/outreach work.

The targets can include priorities for outreach and detached youth workers. These priorities might also be reflected in the plan of those who manage these workers.

The team plans can be monitored on an on-going basis (perhaps once a month) with each worker evaluating work sessions and time bound programmes. This evaluation can be used to modify or reorient direction towards achieving longer term aims.

Evaluation of work can also take place during

- supervision sessions
- team meetings
- monthly reports, and
- end of year evaluations.

All youth work programmes can thus be planned, monitored and evaluated in adherence with ethical codes and the policy/practice directives that guide the work of the agency.

Line managers can quality assure all programmes. This process provides the means to help ensure that outreach and detached youth workers:

- achieve their planned outcomes
- develop their professional skills and abilities
- evidence outcomes and benefits for young people
- make the necessary changes to practice
- improve their own and the organisation's performance

THE MODEL FOR OUTREACH AND DETACHED YOUTH WORK

A Structured Approach

Outreach and detached work can look quite unplanned and informal, therefore it is important to demonstrate and explain how an outreach and detached youth work project is organised and managed.

This model enables practitioners to be clear where they are at any stage of a project. The time scale on these stages should always be realistic; no attempt should be made to go straight to stage 4 as this would risk being both unprofessional and ineffective in the long term.

STAGE 1 - RESEARCH AND RECONNAISSANCE

- Local information - the area, recent history, previous youth work.
- Trends and statistics - e.g. youth population, crime and educational attainment figures.
- People and agencies - e.g. councillors, agencies, community groups, schools, police.
- Facilities and services - e.g. leisure, youth, health, education, voluntary.

STAGE 2 - OBSERVATION AND PLANNING

- Mapping the area-location of facilities, housing types and layout, parks, waste ground, shops, meeting places.
- Are there any young people?
- Where do young people congregate?
- Safety/risk assessment.

STAGE 3 - CONTACT WITH AND ENCOUNTERING YOUNG PEOPLE

- Use the 'Four stage model' (see appendix 1)
- What do young people know about the area, what are their views, what are their interests?
- Providing information about the youth work project.
- Building association with individuals and groups.
- Developing and completion of programme.
- Recording contacts and work done.

STAGE 4 - EVALUATION

- Measuring and reporting the learning outcomes and achievements.
- Record individual progression.
- Carrying on/changing things around from lessons learned.
- Finishing the project and future planning

PLANNING PRACTICE

The strategic themes of the agency must permeate all planning.

As set out above, priorities and targets should be included in all youth work delivery. Managers should set outreach and detached youth work targets within the overall plans of the agency.

The setting of annual targets and priorities for outreach and detached work should be planned and implemented in accordance with the general aims of the agency and within the organisational policy context.

Outreach and detached youth work programmes must evolve from clear and consistent evidence of need. Workers should work to an agreed plan of action, responding to the previous findings and make detailed recordings as soon as possible after each session.

Workers should establish a 'co-working agreement' with work partners. They should spend some time discussing and planning each session, checking out any concerns with colleagues and managers.

RECORDING

Outreach and detached workers should record each session of work in line with the requirements of the agency. Where possible this should be done electronically and not hand written.

Recording should be printed off and kept securely.

A standard recording system should be adopted (see appendix 3).

The recording form should include the following information:

- 1) Name of worker(s)
- 2) Precise times of engagement and disengagement
- 3) Location
- 4) Weather conditions
- 5) Environment/atmosphere
- 6) Outcomes of interaction
- 7) Follow-up action required

Recording forms should indicate clearly the 'stage' contact is at ie. is it first contact? Is it on-going contact? Is it planned follow-up and so on?

All outreach and detached youth workers should chart individual progression. A common progression chart can be agreed and developed and introduced.

Information from recordings should be shared with line managers during supervision and should be used as a tool to evaluate, plan and follow-up on events or issues.

Inter-agency and joint working partnerships

There may be joint working arrangements for detached youth work due to funding streams or shared targets and it is important that protocols are developed and implemented for effective partnerships.

This can ensure that the aims and objectives of the work are clear and the ethos of detached/outreach youth work is maintained.

Some of the partnership agencies may include:

- Police Service
- Voluntary/community sector
- Health organisations
- Social services
- Schools
- Churches
- Colleges

Administration

Outreach and detached workers are employed within area teams, with specific job descriptions and personal specifications.

All youth work staff have a nominated line manager, an accessible base, participate in team and other relevant staff meetings. They should have access to support while practicing.

In addition, managers should ensure that outreach and detached youth work staff have access to reasonable finance and resources to support the work, including:

- Petty cash
- A mobile phone
- Specialist clothing
- Programme costs
- Resource materials
- Administrative support

Support, Supervision and Sharing Practice

The agency should recognise that any detached/outreach youth work team will need to operate from a base that is of suitable standard and fully compliant with established health and safety regulations and policies.

The work base should have access to ICT equipment, stationary (including stamps), storage space for resources, space for team meetings, group work sessions etc.

It is essential (not optional) to have a clear, motivated and effective line management system to support, guide and monitor the work of outreach and detached youth workers.

The line manager can give informal help and support when appropriate but the support might be guaranteed through a formal supervision session lasting one hour, which should take place approximately every four weeks.

The outcomes of this meeting should be recorded using a supervision recording form (see appendix 4) and a copy should be forwarded to the worker.

A training event can be organised annually for outreach and detached workers. Bi-monthly peer support groups can be established to encourage sharing of good practice. These meetings might be chaired in rotation by a nominated colleague and notes of these meetings forwarded to line managers. Peer support sessions can be regarded as face-to-face work.

Outreach and detached workers should be afforded the opportunity to develop their practice by working alongside other youth workers delivering programmes, working in schools and other youth provision.

Training and Development

There should be a range of training opportunities for outreach and detached youth work staff. Training ideally might include:

- Induction and child protection training for new staff
- Personal safety
- Agency policy training
- Specialist issues - drugs, sexual health, the law
- Planning and evaluation
- Risk assessment/health and safety
- First aid
- Networking
- Individual training identified through skills audit
- Sharing of best evidence based practice

Key Principles

The main priority for the outreach and detached youth worker is the delivery of youth work programmes with young people who are not engaged in mainstream provision.

Outreach and detached youth workers must not be confined solely to one geographical area or zone within the area project's designated boundaries.

Workers should, where possible, be available to respond to requests by clients.

Outreach and detached youth work should be carried out over a 7 night period.

Weekend work should be a regular feature of the area team's practice.

It is a requirement that youth workers work 4 x 3 hour evening sessions per week. Outreach and detached workers should be afforded the opportunity to develop their practice by working alongside other youth workers delivering programmes in the community, making use of community resources such as local halls, youth centres and schools. Outreach and detached workers should be afforded flexibility, through their line manager, to respond appropriately on a given night to such issues as inclement weather and working across all or neighbouring zones to make contact with young people

Professional Standards

Work sessions - should include face-to-face youth work, preparation and community profiling (mapping), supervision, annual performance review, team meetings, training, agency wide events and inter-agency meetings.

Staff absence, illness notification, cover - consistency is crucial to maintain associations with young people on the streets. Every effort should be made to ensure that each programmed session is delivered and every effort is made to notify colleagues, line manager, and young people if there is an unavoidable absence due to illness. Holidays should always be planned in advance.

Cancelling sessions at short notice - there may be a range of circumstances relating to the weather, staff arriving late, other youth work commitments, administration tasks etc. which may lead street work staff to consider not delivering the session as planned. Cancelling sessions, starting late, finishing them early should be a very rare occurrence and should be immediately notified to the line manager. Other related work should always be put in its place e.g. a team meeting, incident analysis, review of safety, community profile update, supervision and visits to other agencies.

Confidentiality - (see code of practice appendix 2).

Gender mix – Given that the agency aims to have a workforce that reflects society/the community, it is preferable to have a male/female street work team for each session but this is not always possible.

Revealing personal information (staff) - whilst it is important that outreach and detached staff are open with young people, they should be prepared and clear about the level of personal information that they share. Personal issues relating to family, relationships, criminal activity, substance use etc. may be appropriate to share at the right time, but if this has not been thought through or talked through with team colleagues it may not lead to a positive outcome and may put colleagues in a difficult position.

Language - outreach and detached youth work staff should not use any offensive language during a youth work session. Even though the language may be that used by the young people. Be aware of your body language and the messages that you are sending out. The use of appropriate humour can make a positive contribution to relationship building.

Honesty - it is important that outreach and detached youth workers are honest with young people and not make promises that cannot be kept.

Smoking - outreach and detached youth work staff should adhere to the agency's smoking policy and be mindful of the law regarding smoking and young people.

Drugs and alcohol issues - young people under the influence of - whilst outreach and detached workers might connect with some young people who are under the influence of drugs and alcohol, staff will need to quickly make an assessment of the situation. This is to assess the effectiveness of an encounter, whether it is safe and also how other young people and the community may perceive this. Workers should be fully aware of, and compliant with their agency's drugs and alcohol policy.

Drugs and alcohol issues - staff - youth work staff should not be under the influence of drugs or alcohol during a youth work session.

Moral and cultural dilemmas – outreach and detached workers will be involved in discussion with young people on a wide range of issues. Whilst youth workers may

have strong opinions and values of their own it is important to use skills in drawing out the views of young people and offering alternative perspectives. Inappropriate handling of topics such as religion, politics, drug use, sex and relationships, the family, current news stories etc. may alienate the young people if it is seen as the youth workers 'hobby horse' or does not take the experience of the young person's community/family into account.

Political/community unrest - the worker's personal safety is always paramount. If any worker deems a situation dangerous they should withdraw and inform their line manager immediately.

Duty of care – It is important to remember that outreach and detached youth workers have a duty of care to all those they work with, including young people

The project in both Malta and Romania has made a start not only in regard to extending practice, but (perhaps more importantly) at the time of writing partners are beginning to generate approaches to outreach, detached and street work appropriate to context and young people.

The energetic critic might see anything else (seeking merely to 'implant' or replicate models of practice') to be partly, wholly or deeply colonial. We have together been able to look at ideas about 'best practice' and begin to adapt the same to the needs, wants, cultural capacity, contextual and local socio-economic and environmental orientations.

This is probably much more than could have, at the outset of our collaboration, been expected. As such, all those involved, managers, trainers, young people and face-to-face workers, should be congratulated for this extended exercise in open-minded and convivial exploration and education.

Energetic debate, as part of our proceedings, has enabled us to embark together on the task of advancing practice for the benefit of young people. It is hard to see what more could be asked of such a project.

However, according to "Towards 2020" (2015:22) there is a solid commitment to: *"...ensuring that youth policy is evidence-based and outcome focused. Priority will continue to be given to research as it believes that this provides all those working with and for young people with an invaluable tool and source of relevant and up-to-date information. The research programme for the period 2015-20 will target the main areas that concern young people today, such as education (including the digital divide and skills gaps), employment, environment, rights and responsibilities, health and well-being, and justice."* Further, for Dunne et al. (2014:7), it is not only important to look at what makes youth work successful but also. "to take stock of the outcomes associated with successful practice."

For them: *"Currently, a general lack of data and robust evaluation hinders the sector from demonstrating effectiveness."*

They go on to state that:

"...successful youth work practice can result in a range of positive outcomes for young people which enable them to:

- *Develop skills and competences in a diverse range of areas (their human capital);*
- *Strengthen their network and social capital; Change particular behaviours (such as risk behaviours);*
- *Build positive relationships."*

(ibid.)

Such findings, commitments and conclusions obviate the necessity for practitioners, and those tasked with the justification of practice by way of research and quality assurance, not to rest on academic or practice laurels. Research into youth work practice, like day-to-day youth work on the ground, is not an end-in-itself, it is a continuing means to an end; the extension of welfare and learning resources/ opportunities to young people for their continued benefit and growth and thus the well-being and conviviality of neighbourhoods, towns, cities, nations our continent and our planet.

However, while the needs and wants of young people have some consistency regardless of time and place, differences in perspectives and variations in terms of life style options change from generation to generation and alter according to context and culture. This being the case, youth work is never in a position where the practitioner or the researcher can claim to 'know it all'. As the cultural and social reach of the individual young person and young people as a population group extends exponentially, as we breach the ever expanding horizons of cyber space, so expectations, hopes, ambitions, appetites and perspectives grow and gain dimension.

Currently many of us celebrate living in a world of colourful and multifaceted opportunities, but often for some young people this can be a source of confusion, frustration and disorientation. At the same time others are relatively constrained by circumstance, forms of discrimination and prejudice, temporary or permanent repression or even personal choices. These individuals and groups thus restricted can carry similar feelings to their apparently more 'liberated' age-group peers, of being socially and personally thwarted.

Goethe (1774) had it that:

"Everyone believes in his youth that the world really began with him, and that all merely exist for his sake."

When the vision of youth, energised as it is with enthusiasm and anticipation for the new, is cracked or shattered the descent to disillusion can be steep and so rapid. Consequent feelings of disappointment can quickly mutate into dissatisfaction, the progeny of which is disaffection and alienation from wider society. At this point even the best of us are, and have been, prone to acts of resistance, defiance of authority, mutiny, rebellion and delinquency. However, unmediated such responses can transmute, via the promise of the type swift, 'root one' solutions offered by incarnations of militancy and extremism; the latter is sustained by human dissatisfaction and acts as a magnet to the newly directionless.

Dunne et.al. (ibid.) argue that:

"Beyond the individual level outcomes, youth work is:

- An important component of our social fabric offering a space for contact, exchange and engagement among youth but also between generations; and - Of value in its own right." They go on to suggest that; *"Most youth work activities are designed to offer learning experiences that can be both enriching and fun and offer activities that are shared with others. These have a social value and should be recognised as such."*


Clearly if we ignore this by failing to renew our own vision of practice regularly, by implication we have failed to replenish this socially valuable response. This being the case we cannot leave matters here; we need to set in place intentions and commitments to continue research and practice review and renewal.

This might be thought of as the foundation of professional judgement and practice integrity, but also effective and safe delivery of services.

With this in mind it is logical to make the time and give effort to appraise and evaluate progress and outcomes using the synergy we have accumulated as a partnership..

At the final meeting in London the project partners in principle agreed that the continuance of their collaboration would make sense practically and in terms of time and resources already devoted to the development of detached practice. As such it would seem expedient to pursue further funding to:

- Generate a shared model of evaluation and assessment of outcomes to inform and review delivery (that might be consistently informed and refreshed);
- Look to create educational and learning materials with the aim of promoting pan-European good practice in detached youth work;
- Champion specialist modules in detached practice for professionally qualifying and post qualifying youth work courses;
- Encourage and develop supervision practice in and between national contexts (understanding supervision to be a prime tool in the honing and fostering of professional judgement and quality assurance);
- Produce on-going research relating to detached practice, perhaps initiating a regular on-line journal that could be accessed and contributed to internationally.

The background of the page features a silhouette of a person walking away from the viewer on a beach. The sun is setting in the distance, creating a soft, hazy glow. The sky and water are a mix of light and dark tones. Overlaid on the image are several clusters of hexagons in various shades of orange, red, and white, some with thin black outlines, arranged in a pattern that suggests a molecular or crystalline structure.

'Lily pad' research and practice, the skipping from one temporary, time constrained project to another, has been the bane of youth work internationally. It is a waste of resources and often results in replication and a lack of joined up thinking.

Consistency of practice and enquiry is the means to invigorate, deliver and assure the relevance and so take-up of services. This is just common sense, but although Voltaire in his Dictionnaire philosophique (1764) declared "le sens commun n'est pas si commun" we have it in our purview to create exceptions. Isn't questioning perceived truths after all at least in part an outcome of curiosity, that very human attribute, which is our most basic conduit of learning and the very beat of youth work's heart?

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APPENDIX 1: THE FOUR STAGE MODEL

Engagement with young people happens at different levels, which do not always follow a set order and all interactions move at their own pace. However, outreach and detached youth work need to involve a shared agenda between young people and the worker.

Stage 1 - starting point

Stage 2 – first moves

Stage 3 – developing

Stage 4 – working

Stage 1 Approaching young people is both easy and complicated, it requires skill and sensitivity so take time to introduce yourself and to explain what you are doing and why you are doing it. This first interaction is vital in terms of setting the scene for future work.

Stage 1 is about gathering information, assessing needs and understanding the issues for the particular group of young people with whom you are trying to engage. It may take a number of engagements before progress can be achieved

- Make contact with young people by visiting streets, parks, schools, shops;
- Engage young people through use of dialogue, but don't rule out using questionnaires, leaflets – some people like them (others of course don't);
- Complete assessment of need;
- Consider using creative approaches.

Stage 2 - Useful tools of engagement are activities; an activity can become a means for growth. Ideas include meeting in a different environment in order to share experiences or relate to an individual in a different context. At this point it will be important to introduce a basic type of contract defining behaviour and responsibilities.

- Organise trips to bowling alleys, outdoor pursuits, and other activities;
- Guided tours around area organised by young people or an activity in the street such as football;
- Activities may also include use of local resources such as parks, leisure centres, schools, community halls, sporting activities and minibus trips.

Potential Outcomes

- Enhanced dialogue and association building – team building;
- Development of skills in organisation and communication;
- Opportunity to assess group's ability to cope with external issues and environments;
- Agreed future actions between young people and workers;
- Goal setting introducing change through contract, participation and ownership.

Stage 3 - Introduce pieces of work with time bound, task oriented groups. Generally the task will dictate the type of environment, for example, youth club, resource centre or staying on the street. The group will set goals for itself requiring members to work co-operatively towards these ends while seeking to support one another and sharing ideas, knowledge and skills. Members of the group have the opportunity to be involved fully in the design, implementation and evaluation of the piece of work. The group should also be ready to engage with a fully working contract agreed with the detached workers.

- Group work around specific needs/issues - personal and social development (PSD), may include arts and drama, youth exchanges;
- Introductions to partnership agencies that can provide specialist information or funding/ resources;

- Residential experiences, both home and away;
- Connections with local youth provision and other community groups where the organisations may offer future development;
- Advocating with/on behalf of young people with the local community and or voluntary statutory organisations;
- Working alongside young people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds;
- Certificated courses on relevant topics.

Potential Outcomes

- Managed change in participants life skills and views;
- Development of timescales with negotiated conclusion;
- Development of group work skills ie communication and active listening;
- Individual/group growth and, depending on nature of work, a product might be produced;
- Improved tolerance and understanding of others;
- Resolution of issues between young people and the community.

Stage 4 - Associations built, developing skills for use in life and a high degree of participation and problem solving from the individuals. From now on the association with the outreach and detached youth workers will change and young people will demonstrate progress in terms of their personal and social development, doing stuff for themselves – the worker becomes less of a facilitator organiser and more of a servant (providing services on the means to service self). If an exit strategy has not been designed now is the opportune time to negotiate it with the young people.

- Developing an exit strategy to end work, this could include follow-up on specific issues, referral on to local youth provider, training agency or college;
- Training in negotiated, identified area such as young leaders' programme, citizenship, peer education or job skills;
- Community development through active participation;
- Evaluation of the work to date. This should include all aspects of the engagement with young people;
- Presentation of certificates or awards.

Potential Outcomes

- Active learning for both the young people and the outreach and detached youth workers.
- Increased ability to contribute to the needs of others.
- Referrals and partnerships with other local youth organisations/agencies.
- Enhanced knowledge skills and motivation that enables young person to make informed choices.
- Improved community cohesion/integration.
- Increased capacity to take on leadership roles.

APPENDIX 2: CODE OF PRACTICE FOR OUTREACH/DETACHED WORKERS

A code of practice can provide guidance on what is or is not professional conduct or behaviour for a worker. It establishes the importance of moral, ethical and legal responsibilities. It applies values and ethical principles to specific situations which may arise in the practice of youth work.

The youth worker/young person association is the foremost ethical concern, but it does not exist in social isolation. To this end, the youth worker's responsibilities to young people, themselves, colleagues, to employers and the wider community must be carefully considered.

All agency staff should be required to adhere to the organizational code of practice. In addition street work staff should not undertake face-to-face work alone with young people on the streets. There may be occasions where staff will need to contact or pass on information to young people without a colleague being present e.g. sickness of a colleague, passing on specific items of information - this should be done after informing someone else and only with individuals and groups known to you.

Reduction of Risks

- When making contact with young people on the streets never work alone;
- Carry identification cards at all times;
- Have a mobile phone, personal attack alarm and a pocket torch with you;
- Make sure someone knows when you are expected to return to base;
- Wear appropriate clothing, designed for all weathers;
- Do not give lifts to individuals in your car unless previously agreed with your line manager;
- Check terms and conditions of your personal car insurance before using your own car for work related journeys;
- Do not lend money or cigarettes;
- Reduce the amount of personal property to a minimum;
- When sensing personal danger, withdraw at once and re-visit when the time is right;
- All areas may present a risk and therefore the agency's risk assessment procedures must be adhered to especially when working in new neighbourhoods;
- Monitor the boundaries between professional and personal associations;
- Do not use physical or verbal force;
- Use appropriate language and humour.

Knowing your Patch

- Always spend sufficient time in researching the patch so it is well known to you before any contact work begins;
- Monitor any significant moments when things may not have gone smoothly;
- Get to know nearest residents in case help is ever needed;
- Assess danger spots, and safety resources;
- Discuss alternative actions with the staff team and line manager, and work on reducing the danger zone next time;
- Avoid going into 'hidden' street areas unless this is the only way of contacting a particular target group;
- Always inform colleagues or managers before making this move;
- Choose well-lit meeting places after dark and in bad weather, under streetlights, outside late opening shops, seats by low walls;
- For clear vision through angled passageway, both in front and behind, one worker should walk slightly ahead;
- Be wary of treading on 'territory' where criminal activity is known to take place and may make offenders suspicious and hostile to unknown adults.

The Law

- Be known to the local police; explain the youth worker's role, liaise with other agency workers (health centre staff, leisure centre staff, shops etc.);
- Act within the law;
- Be aware of the laws which may criminalise young people e.g. prostitution, drug use, weapons and how they may affect you by association;
- Where contacts are interacting with the police, try to avoid intervening unless necessary;
- Only ask what is going on if you feel you have to know, then offer assistance;
- Show your ID, if you get arrested make a call to your immediate line manager.

Confidentiality

This is an essential aspect of the professional association between youth workers, their employers and young people. Failure to get this right can lead to all manner of problems, conflicts of interest and damage to working associations.

If a confidential relationship has been established with a young person, their agreement should generally be obtained before information is shared with a third party.

If a young person shares information which has child protection implications, or demonstrates a serious intent which could result in personal injury to themselves or others, then the youth worker has no option but to take appropriate action to safeguard those involved, (and that may involve a breach of confidentiality).

Essentially the decision to share information about a young person must be taken in the context of what is best for that young person.

In any case the use of general terms should probably allow you to share anxieties about a young person without betraying a confidence.

Confidentiality can also, in certain circumstances, benefit young people by enabling you to pursue an issue while protecting their identity.

Information received from a young person should be treated as confidential to the project and not individual workers.

Youth workers are advised that they should never offer total confidentiality and must be honest about the restrictions that are placed upon them as agency employees and explain to young people, under what circumstances they might have to share any disclosures with someone else.

This should be done at the first sign that a young person may be about to 'offload'

APPENDIX 3: OUTREACH AND DETACHED WORK RECORDING SHEET

To be completed before session

Date ___/___/___ Day _____ Location _____

Start Time _____ End Time _____

Weather _____

Zone/Area _____

Staff/Volunteers/Partnerships

Name	Organisation

Detached Session Plan (include areas, hotspots, proposed activity/contact etc...)

To be completed before session

Statistical Data of Contacts

	Male	Female
Under 10		
11-13		
14-15		
16-17		
18-21		
22-25		
Total		
Overall Total		

Session Report

Interactions (first contact, planned contact, what happened during session etc.)

Future Action

Personal Consideration

Issue Raised/Follow-Up

APPENDIX 4: SUPERVISION RECORDING FORM

Supervisee	
Sate of meeting	
Venue	

Notes	Action

NOTE ON SUPERVISION:

Connected to the need for regular review of direction, results and outcomes, but also for an ongoing awareness of accountability, safeguarding and consideration of practice, it was clear that supervision needs to become part of routine practice.

There has been an understanding of this prior to the evaluation visit, but following training, as well as open and honest dialogue, it was agreed that supervision needs to be a part of all youth work practice in order for work to be accountable, planned, justified, understood and when needed, changed, altered, redirected, postponed or discontinued to allow for new innovation and experiment.

In the Maltese context it is to the credit of local workers that they initiated foundation training and have worked with international colleagues to continue to hone and better supervision delivery and use. This has involved initiating a novel skype network of supervision, connecting Maltese supervisors and supervisees with counterparts/partners in the UK.



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