Exploring Youth Work Education

Research report

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Introduction

This is a research report that presents findings from the research conducted in the Erasmus+ project *Exploring Youth Work Education* (EYWE). The background to the project is Council of Europe's first recommendation on youth work in 2017 (https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectId=0900001680717e78).

This recommendation encourages member states to develop and strengthen youth work policies and practices. The recommendation draws special attention to the fact that youth work needs a competency-based framework for the education and training of youth workers. Some countries have done a lot regarding the matter on youth work education while others are falling behind. To uphold the recommendation of the Council, the project aims *to establish a coherent and flexible competency-based framework for the education and training of paid and volunteer youth workers that takes into account existing practice, new trends and arenas, as well as the diversity of youth work.* To develop this framework research about the way youth work is understood, practiced, and produced by youth workers is needed. This report is intended to provide a research-based foundation for the development of the competence-based framework.

The organisations participating in the project are Ungdom og Fritid, the Norweigian National youth club organisation; bOJA, Austria, the centre of competency for Open Youth Work in Austria; The Faculty of Education at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden; and SamFés, the Icelandic National Youth Club organisation.

As an illustration of the differences in training pathways for youth workers in Europe, the pathways are very different between the participating countries.

- In Norway there are no legal obligations for youth workers to have any specific education to work in a youth club. Therefore, the youth worker profession has typically been a profession where practical skills have been at least as important as the formal competence.

- In Austria there are no legally regulated training for youth workers, but training in the field of social pedagogy/social work/youth work is advantageous and often

required by employers. The necessary knowledge and skills can be acquired by graduating university with a bachelor's or master's degree (social pedagogy or social work) and/or within the framework of training courses at various adult education institutions as well as at private training and further education institutes.

- In Sweden there are no obligations for specific education or professional certification for youth workers, but most professional youth workers have a relevant education, e.g youth work, social work, social pedagogy, cultural work etc. Formal youth work education is only available at folk high schools. The schools jointly prepare an educational certificate of completed studies.

- In Iceland youth work in youth clubs is not bound by law. Therefore, youth workers do not need to have and specific education to be a youth worker. However, education is preferred and for managerial positions in youth clubs/houses even required. For this end you can acquire a degree in Social and Leisure studies, both at bachelor's and master's level at the University of Iceland.

About the report

University of Gothenburg (GU) has been responsible for the research design and implementation during the project and the participants from GU are also the main authors of this report.

The disposition of this report is as follows. As a broad background we begin by outlining some important aspects of late modern society that are of great importance to today's youth, and thus also important to youth work. We believe that a general understanding of the characteristics of late modern society is important to understand the fundamental conditions of youth work. We then present a brief characterization of open youth work based on a literature review that we have conducted. Thereafter we present the design and methods used in the research, followed by a presentation of the research findings. We end the report with a discussion, in which we try to theorize our findings, and some concluding thoughts.

Background

Late modernity

The term late modernity is often used to describe the social development that gained momentum in the latter part of the 20th century, and which is characterized by globalization and individualization. Although society has always been perceived as inconstant, volatility and change are the very essence of late modern societies (Giddens 1991). This is contrasted with societies in earlier eras where values were more constant over time and life was more predictable and possible to overview. Social bonds to family and friends were often permanent and when growing up most children and young people knew what was expected of them in the future. Their path of life was many times marked out in advance and the history, present and future could be seen as a coherent and relatively unchanging unit (Giddens 1991). However, due to the increasingly rapid pace of change, it is more difficult to make this connection in late modern societies. People's expectations of the future are therefore less constant and continuously reshaped in relation to the information and opportunities they perceive. The individual is constantly gaining new horizons of understanding.

The constant and rapid changes that characterizes late modern societies means that children's and young people's life trajectories to a lesser extent are determined in relation to their parents' life trajectories. Instead, each person is directed to make their own choices based on the information and knowledge they have available. It is usually said that there has been a shift from a "standard biography" to a "choice biography" (see e.g., Brannen & Nilsen 2005). People's attachment to common traditions has weakened and made the individual less attached to the family. When the influence from traditional frames of reference weakens people instead shape their identities in relation to other social contexts such as social media, mass media and the culture industry. These changes affect, for example, areas such as family forms, relationships, working life and sexuality, but also the choice of leisure activities. While children's and young people's relationships with people outside the family become more and more important, subject-centeredness also increases. Individuals become more focused on their own interests and needs instead engaging in common affairs and taking a

"collective responsibility" (Ziehe 1993). However, the distance between culturally formed expectations and people's everyday reality often creates an awareness of one's own inadequacy. A gap thus arises between what people want to do and what people can do (Ziehe 1987).

Producing lifestyles

The range of opportunities and choices that children and young people are faced with is largely produced by the media and commercial players in the "lifestyle market". It is sometimes said that children and young people today rarely make genuinely own (primary) experiences. Instead, their experiences are loaded with media produced images and interpretations of the experiences they face. This process is called expropriation (Ziehe, 1987). It affects people's reflexivity and goes hand in hand with the capacity to observe, understand and relate to different situations. In this process, lifestyle planning and "choice" of lifestyle have a central place in children's and young people's aspiration to "become someone". It is important to always be on the way to new adventures and not get stuck in old ways. In the end, it's about finding, experiencing, and representing yourself. It is also about being unique and having the opportunity to share familiarities with other people. At the same time, people's sensitivity to what others think and think about what they do and who they are also increases. Collectively, this is called subjectivation (Ziehe 1993). Even if the subjectivation basically entails good opportunities to identify with others and feel belonging, it also entails an increased risk of feeling rejected, wronged, or not liked. With increased expectations and visible possibilities, the feeling of doability also increases. The body and identity become an open project. The human desire for stability has changed into a desire to constantly satisfy new needs (Bauman 2008). The implication is that people's desires are often unstable and bottomless and contribute to a consumption of leisure activities where the object of consumption can be easily replaced. People thus have a fleeting approach to leisure activities. Basically, it's about becoming someone and not dissolving into a gray mass of anonymous people, but instead attracting attention and being wanted.

Liquid modernities

Late modern societies can also be understood as liquid modernities. Liquid modernities are distinguished primarily by the renegotiation of time from linear and cyclic time to pointillist time (Bauman 2008). Pointillist time lacks context and continuity and consists of a multiplicity of interruptions that separate different moments from each other. In relation to leisure activities, it could be said that young people constantly arrange these points so that they form a whole in the moment which appears to them in a meaningful way in relation to the person they want to be. Being a sought-after person can be equated with being a sought-after "good" and many times it is about being able to "sell yourself" in various contexts with the help of your leisure activities. While people become the goods, they themselves sell, a transfer of these consumption patterns takes place to the sphere of human relations (Bauman 2008). Just as in any commodity market, the individual therefore treats leisure activities as different consumption objects. Leisure activities are discarded when they no longer provide full satisfaction. In addition is nor is the individual particularly interested in participating in the production of larger wholes.

Leisure in late modernity

The constant construction of identity means that leisure time has recently become increasingly important in people's lives. To clarify what this change concretely means, however, a short summary of the history of leisure is required. The societal and political interest in culture and leisure activities arose because of the rise of industrial society. Working hours were then regulated in a way that did not exist during the agricultural society. The result was that the work sphere was separated from the leisure sphere. However, clear moral obligations from the work sphere remained within the leisure sphere. The ones in power believed that people should use their free time to create better opportunities to manage their jobs, or for so-called constructive activities such as sports, association activities and educational activities. Mainly, it was about the leisure activities contributing to protecting society from disturbing and divisive influences. Today's free time and leisure activities are still strongly influenced by the structure and values of industrial society. This has repercussions on how people

perceive their own free time. As a complement to working life, free time should be devoted to something useful or to recreation, such as being active in associations, culture or being out in nature. However, today there is an added emphasis on consumption and experiences, liberation from traditions and that people are expected to construct themselves and their identity. Lifestyle, identity, and self-presentation are important concepts (Tebelius 2012).

The demand for personal development and realizing oneself in one's free time means that a new value system has been established with approaches to a new ethics based on the principle that one has obligations towards oneself (Tebelius 2012; cf. Beck 1992). Through the search for new social affiliations in their free time, people free themselves in relation to both work and politics but also private relationships. This has led to a decrease in the sense of community while the scope for private actions and decisions has increased (Beck 1997). With these changes, free time has gained a wider meaning and is no longer perceived mainly as recovery and relaxation from the demands of work. Leisure time can instead mean innovative attempts to define new dimensions of one's own self in relation to other selves. Ingrained roles can thus be exceeded, and the individual can (via their leisure activity) "become someone else".

Open youth work

Internationally, the idea of what open youth work is and what it should be varies. Sometimes open youth work is understood as part of young people's education, sometimes it is classified as belonging to social work or included in discussions about social welfare. In addition, open youth work is described as part of young people's leisure, cultural or sporting activities. Open youth work is also carried out by a variety of organisations. Primarily, it concerns voluntary and charitable organisations, followed by municipal, regional, and religious organisations (Sercombe 2018). In some contexts, psychology is emphasized as the scientific discipline of open youth work, in other contexts, sociology or the humanities are emphasized. The discourse of open youth work is characterized by concepts such as "positive youth development", social pedagogy, human rights, informal education, radical feminism, and critical pedagogy.

It is difficult to give a fair picture of the diversity of open youth work described above. To some extent, one could say that diversity is part of the nature of open youth work (cf. Coburn 2010). In the material we have seen, however, open youth work appears relatively unambiguously as a bottom-up process where young people's interests are in focus (see e.g., Scott-McKinley 2016; Ord 2016; de St Croix 2016). A characteristic of a subordinated process is that it has open ends (Davies 1979). Open youth work thus includes activities and situations that are not determined in advance, they also have no planned end and can therefore develop in different directions. Often processes controlled from below also include elements of critical reflection where young people become or are made aware of different power relations and its disciplinary discourses (Butters & Newell 1978; Ord 2016; Graham et al. 2018; Jeffs 2018).

Making young people aware of different power relations is considered fundamental for open youth work to be able to open young people's innovations and new ways of thinking and being (Cullen & Bradford 2018; Andersson 2018). Theoretically, the pursuit of critical reflection is often based on Paulo Freire's (1996) theory of liberating pedagogy. Within the liberating pedagogy, the dialogue between people is central. In the dialogue, an awareness-raising process arises where the participants develop critical thinking. Freire distinguishes a "critical thinking" and a "naive thinking" where critical thinking is about constantly changing reality and creating opportunities for

development through people learning new things about themselves, while credulous thinking is about an adaptation to the normalized reality and a development where people learn about themselves (Freire 1996:73). Learning nes in this way is about young people gaining new perspectives both on themselves and on the surrounding society, while learning more is about reinforcing the perspectives young people already have. The open youth work's focus on "unpacking" norms and providing alternatives for young people to be able to explore partially hidden structures and question existing power relations in their environment thus constitutes a fertile ground for young people to learn new things about themselves and in the same way develop a critical engagement (cf. Busche 2013).

One of the goals of open youth work is thus to make it easier for young people to be able to influence their own development (Collin et al. 2018). Above all, this is expected to happen through young people discovering and identifying their own abilities and opportunities to act. By focusing on the empowerment of young people and increased civic involvement, open youth work has a clear political dimension. It is about increasing knowledge and skills in terms of citizenship and political participation, but also about creating the conditions for young people to take action and claim their citizenship. In its most radical form, open youth work aims to carry out so-called social justice projects to increase the recognition and responsiveness of young people and their views in different social contexts (Fusco & Heathfield 2015).

Methods

Participants

There was a total of 39 participants in all three focus group meetings. Nine youth workers participated in two meetings and the remaining 30 in one. All in all, there were three participating youth workers from Sweden, six from Iceland, ten from Austria and fourteen from Norway. The age span of the participants is xx to xx, and there is huge span regarding youth worker experience. Some participants have been youth workers for more than 25 years others are relatively new and have been working for no more than a few years. All participants are working or has been working as professional youth workers. Some of them are now in management positions or positions in national youth/youth work organisations.

Data production

The data was produced in focus group discussions at three meetings in the Erasmus+ project *Exploring Youth Work Education.* The first sessions were held at an Introductory Training of Trainers-meeting (ITT) in Reykjavik 5-7 April 2022, with youth workers from Norway and Iceland participating. A corresponding ITT-session was held in Gothenburg 19-21 April 2022, with participating youth workers from Sweden and Austria. A third and final focus group session was held at the International Training of Trainers meeting in Oslo 5-9 September 2022, with youth workers from all four participating countries.

The purpose of the focus group discussions has been to collect the youth worker's thoughts and experiences of different aspects of youth work to make visible fundamental principles that the youth workers believe are the basis for the youth work they conduct. The main goal was to capture the identity of open youth work, what open youth work is for the participating youth workers. Therefore, we have focused on how the youth workers view youth work and which terms or concepts they want to use to describe it.

The focus groups in Reykjavik and Gothenburg had the same structure and dealt with the following themes:

- Conceptualizing youth work,
- Defining quality in youth work,
- Conditions of youth work.

The first theme is intended to generate words and concepts that describe youth work, and as far as possible, definitions of the most important concepts. The second theme is intended to generate concepts and definitions that describe quality in youth work. Lastly, the third theme is intended to generate descriptions of the conditions of youth work as experienced by the youth workers.

Initially the participants were divided into groups by country so that they could discuss their thoughts and experiences in their native language. After this first session new cross-national groups were put together so that participants from the different countries could share and discuss what had come out of the first focus group discussions. At both stages participants kept notes both of their discussions and of the conclusions they came up with. Finally, a summarizing presentation with all participants of the focus group discussions of the day was made. The presentations produced comments and further discussion. This final session was summarized in a document that was shared with everyone on a widescreen.

The three themes were covered for one day each and the three stages lasted one hour each. Thus, each theme was discussed in three one-hour sessions, i.e., a total of three hours per theme.

At the meeting in Oslo when there where participants from all countries. Before the focus groups started, we presented and discussed the summarized and preliminary analyzed results from the meetings in Reykjavik and Gothenburg. Thus, the focus group discussions at the Oslo meeting were to some extent based on the results from the previous meetings and had a somewhat different format. At this meeting there were no national groups, instead we had a one-and-a-half-hour cross-national discussion and then a one hour summarizing presentation and discussion round. The themes and specific questions for the sessions in Reykjavik and Gothenburg was:

- Youth work practice

- o   Most common tasks in youth work?
- o   Most challenging tasks in YW?
    - ▪   What are the challenges?
    - ▪   How do you deal with them?
- Knowledges/competencies
    - o   What are the most important knowledges/competencies in your work?
    - o   What knowledges/competencies do you lack?
    - o   What are important knowledges/competencies for YW in the future?
- Professionalism in YW
    - o   What is professionalism in YW?
    - o   What is your experience of YW´s relationships to other professions?
    - o   Challenges to YW professionalism?
    - o   What is the status of YW?
    - o   What is status in YW?

The themes and questions for the Oslo sessions was:

- Youth work practice

    - o   Most common tasks in youth work?

    - o   Most challenging tasks in YW?
        - o What are the challenges?
        - o How do you deal with them

- Knowledge and competencies

    - o   What are the most important knowledges/competencies in your work?

    - o   What knowledges/competencies do you lack?

    - o   What are important knowledges/competencies for YW in the future?

- Professionalism in YW

    - o   What is professionalism in YW?

    - o   What is your experience of YW´s relationships to other professions?

    - o   Challenges to YW professionalism?

- o What is the status of YW?

- o What is status in YW?

There were no recordings made of the discussions held in any of the focus groups, but all groups were instructed to take notes and to write down thoughts, ideas, and experiences during the sessions, and they were handed material to be able to do so. We have collected all the material that was produced during the focus group discussions, and we have also documented the presentations and discussions of each theme in the summarizing sessions at the end of each day. The sketches and notes from the focus group discussions and notes from the summarizing discussions are the main data from this study. Thus, the data consists of texts in which the experiences, thoughts and ideas of the participating youth workers are expressed.

Data analysis

The data was analyzed by the researchers, but in continuing discussion with both participants. Our interpretation of the data is based on reading and discussing the wordings and concepts that was produced and documented throughout the project. The process of analyzing the data was conducted in five steps:

- First the researchers inductively categorized the concepts and ideas produced in the focus group sessions in Iceland and Gothenburg. The data was sorted in categories that appeared as relevant and expressed fundamental ideas and principles of youth work. We sorted the data both within and between the themes for the focus group discussions.

- In a second step we clarified the principles of the different categories and thereby specified the categories.

- In a third step we presented and our analysis and discussed it at a transnational project meeting (TPM) in Vienna June 20, 2022.

- In a third step the results so far were presented to the participants of the Oslo meeting before the focus group sessions at this meeting began.

- In a fourth step we added the data produced in the Oslo ITT-meeting and developed our analysis further.

- Finally, the results were presented and discussed at a TPM-meeting in Gothenburg November 3, 2022.

Research findings

Hierarchical and non-hierarchical youth work

An important finding in relation to how youth work was described by the participants was the distinction made between, what we name, hierarchical and non-hierarchical aspects of youth work. This distinction is based on whether the youth worker and the youth are imagined to be on "different levels". The hierarchical aspect of youth work is characterized by the youth worker having a role as someone who knows more or better than the youth and therefore should have a role as a leader and ultimately the one in control, while the non-hierarchical aspect is characterized by the youth worker and the youth being equals in terms of knowledge and potential leadership and control in the activities that are set in motion. In table 1 the two different aspect of youth work are presented with examples of typical wordings and concepts used by the youth workers.

Table 1 Hierarchical and non-hierarchical aspects youth work

Hierarchical	Non-hierarchical
Role model	Peer-to-peer
Leader of the youth	With youth as a resource
Guide	Find solutions together
Manager	Non-knowledge as a resource
Teaching the life skills	Doing together
The boundaries between the youth worker and the participant	Not act "over the head" of the young person
The competent youth worker	Equal opportunities
Activation	Flexible youth workers
To do things for young people	Diversity

These different aspects of youth work, one focused on leading, teaching, fostering, and controlling the youth and the other focused on listening, following, not-knowing and being an equal with the youth were continuously present in the focus group discussions. While individual youth workers in the focus groups might have had a general preference for one or the other, all of them gave, in different ways, expression to both these aspects of youth work. It is important to emphasize that these aspects should not be seen as different forms of youth work that are in conflict, and that the

youth worker need to choose one form over the other. But they do express different fundamental principles of youth work that we believe are important to highlight and they also constitute a framework for our further interpretation of the data.

Professional and extra-professional youth work

Another finding that relates to the hierarchical and non-hierarchical aspects of youth work is a distinction between, what we decided to call, a professional and an extra-professional aspect of youth work. The professional aspect is related professionalism in terms of practices based on evidence, reliability, consistency, rules, and guidelines. The extra-professional aspects concern dimensions of youth work that lie outside of what is traditionally considered as professional boundaries and is based on other principles than evidence. In table 2 the professional and extra-professional aspects of youth work is exemplified with typical wordings and concepts used by the youth workers.

Table 2 Professional and extra-professional youth work

Professional	Extra-professional
Reliability/consistency	Innovation
Anchoring what you do in theory and research	Bending the rules (involving all)
Planning, doing, evaluating	Go with the flow
Research based	Have a plan to not have a plan
Always be able to explain what you are doing and why	Patience
Clear guidelines	Slow work
Predictability	Experimenting
Being professional	Learning by failing
Translate theories into methods	Openness

As with the hierarchical and non-hierarchical aspects, both the professional and extra-professional aspects was recurringly articulated by all the youth workers. In the summarizing presentations in the end of each focus group session the discussions sometimes revolved around themes related to professionalism and the need to work in an evidence-based and linear manner, and sometimes around extra-professional aspect related to being-with the youths and "bending the rules" to enable them to pursue their ideas.

Knowing and learning

Relating to the discussion of professional and extra-professional aspects of youth work are questions about knowledge. The professional aspect requires knowledge and specifically evidence-based and formalized knowledge. From this perspective it is important for the youth workers to know and to have a specified knowledgebase for their professional practice. The extra-professional aspect of youth work requires a different approach to knowledge. Instead of knowledge as such the focus of the extra-professional youth work is on learning. This difference between knowledge and learning was clearly highlighted in the focus group discussions. In table 3 knowledge and learning as different aspects of youth work is exemplified with typical wordings and concepts used by the youth workers.

Table 3 Knowledge and learning as aspects of youth work

Knowledge	Learning
Being updated on youth culture	Learn from the youth
Research based activities	Go with the flow
The competent youth worker	Find solutions together
Clear guidelines	Non-knowledge as a resource
Predictability	Innovation
Activation	Experimenting
Leader of the youth	Peer-to-peer
Educated	Learning by failing
How does it match science	Youth should decide

The wording "learn from the youth" was often used by the youth workers, both as a statement of the fact that youth workers learn a lot from the youth, and as an ethically motivated approach to youth work. The idea that a youth worker needs to "dismantle" the professional knowledge and open for the realities of the youth was emphasized in the focus group discussions.

Results and process

Especially in relation to the focus group theme quality in youth work, the distinction between result and process recurred. Quality seems to be mostly associated with measurable results and the measurement as such, while process oriented aspects of

quality was highlighted on a more general level. This led us to a new dichotomy, results and process. There were a lot of data involving wordings and concepts related to measurement and results in youth work, but there were also data that emphasized that youth work by definition is process focused. In table 4 results and process as different aspects of youth work is exemplified with typical wordings and concepts used by the youth workers.

Table 4 Results and process as aspects of youth work

Results	Process
Measuring	Have a plan to not have a plan
Evaluating	Go with the flow
Management only cares about how many kids	You never know what happens
Reliability/consistency	With youth as a resource
Prevention	Seeing the potential in the young person and helping them to see and experience
Teaching life skills	Find solutions together
Leader of the youth	Openness
Budget based on mission	
Municipality plans and their specification of the youth work strategies	

Some of the wordings in the results column express frustration, a frustration that surfaced in the summarizing discussions. Our interpretation is that this frustration is related to the economic-strategic demands that are put on youth work from "above" and which the youth workers often experience makes their work an instrument for other purposes than supporting and empowering the youth. It also mirrors the process aspect of youth work which inherently problematizes a focus on results that can be easily measured.

Data analysis

There are also other dimensions of the data that are important to emphasize in relation to the structure of the results presented above. One such dimension is the difference between quality and what we call "qualiting". This distinction relates to the discussion above about results and process and points at the fact that quality in youth work (as in many other areas) tends to be understood as a something that you report and then are

done with it. The concept of qualiting serves to catch quality as an ethical aspect of the relationships we create and sustain with other people. Qualiting is not a measurable "thing" as quality tends to become, it is a process of discovering new aspects and dimensions of our shared reality. It is a process of being involved in each other and the flows between each other (Andersson 2023:138). Our impression is that qualiting is what the youth workers are doing in their process-oriented work, and which makes this work so hard to measure by predefined quality standards.

Another related dimension is the distinction between fast and slow youth work. There are several examples in the data of the youth workers emphasizing that the process-oriented youth work takes time and in that sense is slow. Youth work cannot be expected to deliver results in a linear fashion. It is complex and elusive and there are not fast-tracks to tangible results.

We also found a distinction between established and non-established forms of youth work in the data. The established form is described as organized and focused on providing specific activities for the youth. The non-established form of youth work is open and not organized in relation to specific activities but focused on "following the flow".

Other aspects

There were also discussions about practical aspect of youth work. The youth workers stressed the importance of grants and being able to find ways of funding different activities. Being good at networking and having digital skills, not least social media, was also raised as competences needed in youth work. Lobbying for youth work was also described as an important skill. In relation to lobbying there were also a discussion about changing the narrative about youth work.

Discussion

Different views of knowledge

The results illustrate that it is difficult and perhaps impossible to define youth work in an unambiguous and uniform way. Uncertainty and openness are a prerequisites for youth work to be able to meet the needs of young people. This in turn gives expression to at least two different ways of looking at knowledge. To further understand and explain the core and identity of open youth activities, we will discuss different ways of looking at knowledge in relation to the two different categories of results presented above.

Epistemic knowledge

As presented above, the hierarchical, professional, knowledge focused, and result-oriented youth work is based on a universal view of knowledge where the production of knowledge is essentially unchanging in time and space. To describe this model of knowledge, Aristotle's concept of "episteme" is often used (Ord 2014; Flyvbjerg 2001; Irwin 1999). Episteme means that knowledge with the help of analytical rationality and corresponds to the scientific ideal in the natural sciences. In the same way, episteme also includes the idea of "social engineering" (Ord 2016; Flyvbjerg 2006). By using theories of the social (that is, knowledge gained with the help of analytical rationality) to solve social problems, it is thus possible to preserve and reinforce a particular knowledge and particular perspectives on how things should work not only in youth work but also in the surrounding society. The youth worker is in this context considered as a kind of technocrat who has control over all decision-making that takes place in youth work and whose legitimacy is created through the possession of "true" knowledge (cf. Maasen & Weingart 2005). Problems are both created and solved within the framework of a particular organisational context and its interest for a specific society.

Phronetic knowledge

The extra-professional and process-oriented youth work, on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of a non-linear and reflexive view of knowledge and strives to create a more "sensible and robust" knowledge that matches the situations young people experience as real (Ord 2014). This model of knowledge is often described using Aristotle's concept of "phronesis" (Ord 2016; Flyvbjerg 2001; Irwin 1999). Unfortunately, there is no direct translation that does justice to the concept of phronesis, but a little carelessly you could say that it is about caution and a practical understanding of the activity you are in. A phronetic knowledge model is ethical and focuses on action. In this model the youth worker has a high moral standard in his actions. In its strictest sense, the youth workers actions are value-rational, and the youth worker strives to make decisions that are fully in line with young people's understandings and interests (cf. Flyvbjerg 2006). Unlike the epistemic model of knowledge, the phronetic model of knowledge includes no goal beyond the act itself. The youth worker delivers activities but leaves it to others to act. However, the phronetic knowledge model includes a critical approach by which the youth worker can work with young people on questions such as: Where are we going? Who will win and who will lose by this? Through which power relations? Is this development desirable? If we are going to do something about it, what are we going to do? (cf. Flyvbjerg 2006). In this way, process-oriented youth workers analyze the underlying power relations of the open youth activity together with young people.

The phronetic knowledge model is about being able to see things not only from one's own perspective, but from the perspective of everyone involved (Ord 2016; Arendt 1961). One of the main abilities in process-oriented youth work is thus linked to reflexivity and the opportunity to make assessments through conversation with young people (Jeffs & Smith 2005). In contrast to a result-oriented youth work, a process-oriented youth work takes the context into account. It is usually said that it is context dependent. While result-oriented youth work is governed by decisions made outside its activities and relies on the predictability that these decisions have a particular effect within it, a process-oriented youth work is fundamentally social and filled with "actors" where the objects are also subjects. This, in turn, leads to direct difficulties if a process-

oriented youth work is not treated as fundamentally social (cf. Flyvbjerg 2001), but instead is based on a notion that there is a direct causal relationship between planned activities and expected results. Being context dependent process-oriented work simply involve a different order. Complex social situations in a process-oriented youth work can therefore not be described with simple goals and expectations of results. Rather, it should be understood as multifaceted and unique in relation to the individuals and the specific circumstances that accompany these individuals (Ord 2016).

Nomadic knowledge -Beyond the phronetic approach

By starting from the idea that young people should have power over their own situation, process-oriented youth activities often challenge the status quo and contribute to change both in terms of individuals and activities but also of society at large (Ledwith 2011). Of course, this does not mean that process-oriented youth workers have all the answers to what needs to be done in the business. Nor does it mean that process-oriented youth workers should have all the answers. Rather, process-oriented youth workers often make use of their "ignorance" when they work side by side with young people in open youth activities (Anderson-Nathe 2008). By showing that they do not know everything, the youth worker opens opportunities for young people to be carriers of their "own" knowledge. At the same time, the line between who "can" and who "can't" become more unclear (Ramey & Lawford 2018). Process-oriented youth activities thus include a re-examination of the relationship between youth workers and young people as binary pairs of opposites and in the same way become movement-emphasized. This in turn describes how the organisation of the process-oriented youth activity space can be considered beyond the phronetic approach. Instead of understanding youth activities with both an epistemic and phronetic view of knowledge as a hierarchical system of relationships, it is possible to understand the process-oriented youth activities as a flow of relationships characterized by mutual recognition. The knowledge model is nomadic and includes the full participation of youth workers as well as young people and where all have full voices. This in turn is an important change in the idea of what young people are and can be both in open youth activities and in society at large. Not least because maintaining youth workers and young people as binary pairs of opposites reinforces the position of young people as "the others" (Anderson-Nathe

2014). In this perspective, open youth activities are about youth workers and young people doing things together and developing co-created "spaces" where the active participation of both is promoted (Ramey & Lawford 2018, Garfat & Fulcher 2012).

Three epistemologies of youth work

The different views of knowledge presented above can be applied to youth work as three epistemological perspectives defining three different logics of youth work. The epistemic epistemology refers to a top-down model of youth work by which the youth worker has a professional role as the one who has knowledge and who bases the youth work practice on policies and evidence. It is by the epistemic logic that youth work produces measurable results.

The phronetic epistemology refers to a bottom-up model of youth work by which the youth are the ones who has knowledge, and the youth workers role is to support and empower the youth to realize their ideas and visions. Thus, the phronetic logic has a process focus, trying to promote and assess development.

We also found a third logic in our analysis of the focus group discussions. We call this logic the nomadic epistemology of youth work. Just as the phronetic, the nomadic epistemology is process oriented. It is also based on the assumption that all knowledges are important and relevant. From a nomadic perspective the youth workers role is to take a position of not knowing and not having ready-made answers, Instead the youth worker needs to take a mediating position and open-up for different knowledges to interact and create new knowledges and new common interests. We find the nomadic epistemology interesting since it is based on an ethic of respect that does not give preference to anybody or any specific knowledge. This opens for mutual exploration and innovation.

The three epistemological perspectives are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Three epistemological perspectives
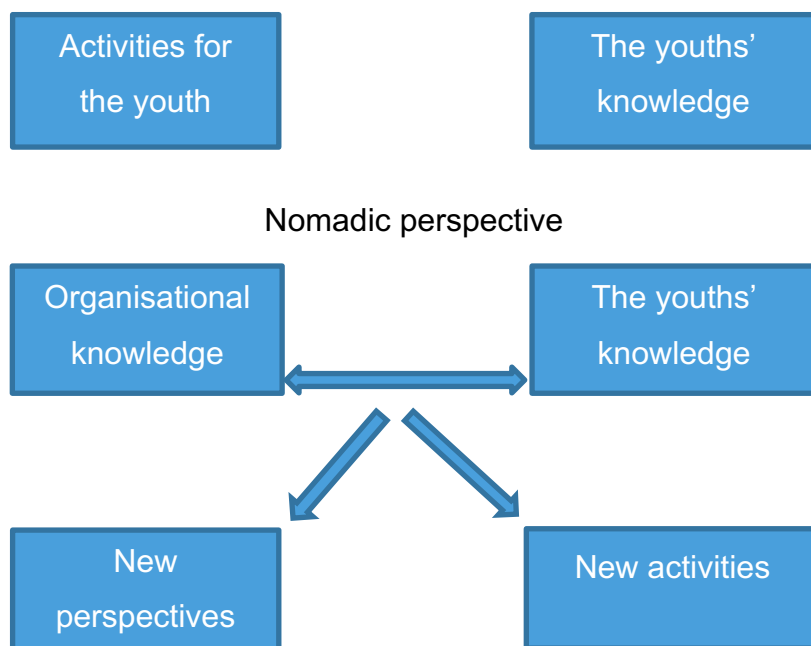
Epistemic perspective   Phronetic perspective

| Organisational knowledge |

| Activities with the youth |

Activities for the youth		The youths' knowledge

Nomadic perspective

Organisational knowledge	⟷	The youths' knowledge
New perspectives		New activities

The three different perspectives imply different forms of youth work practice regarding content and design of activities, the overall logic of the youth work and its desired results. They also imply what we call 'ethical technologies', that is basic techniques that are considered morally correct or acceptable to use to achieve the desired results. It is a matter of the impact the activity will have on the individuals who participate and, by extension, on the surrounding society.

We believe that all three epistemologies are needed in different contexts and situations in youth work. But we also believe that there are specific challenges to the epistemic and the phronetic epistemologies. The epistemic epistemology tends to take status quo of society for granted. In the epistemic logic youth work is a means to an end beyond youth work itself. This is the case when youth work is called upon and legitimated by its role to prevent social problems, like juvenile delinquency. The epistemic logic also asserts that there are specific results and predetermined quality standards that youth work must deliver and meet.

The phronetic epistemology has a challenge in that the youth worker takes a position as being "on the side of the youth" and representing them and their interests, while at the same time being part of institutions that, from an epistemic point of view, have an

interest in controlling young people. This dual loyalty is challenging and there is a risk that phronetic epistemology is limited by it. Related to this there are also a risk that phronetic activities and environments create false hopes and unrealistic expectations of changes of the social and political order.

The nomadic epistemology is characterized by openness. The focus is not on the results as determined stable goals, but on processes of experimenting and becoming. The nomadic epistemology does not privilege any role or knowledge in the youth work context. Instead, it opens for innovation, for doing things in ways that are new to everyone. This is not the same as compromising and searching for a common denominator. The nomadic epistemology involves friction and open discussions with open ends. We believe that it is important to acknowledge the nomadic epistemology in youth work as it provides an image of an often hidden and underdeveloped aspect of youth work.

Epistemic activities

In epistemic activities the organisation, the manager, and the youth worker are intellectually superior to the young people. The organisation, the manager, and the youth worker decide which opinions, wishes and interests are desirable/correct. The intellectual order is expected to bring cultural and political order, people in different roles need to 'know their place'. Epistemic activities also imply maintaining a specific definition of a given situation, and that the youth worker is team-oriented and focused on what is 'for the good of the organisation'. As for the youth they are expected to internalize the norms, values and ideas advocated by the organisation and youth workers. Thus, epistemic activities tend to reproduce social order. The logic of the epistemic activities is presented in table 5.

Table 5. The logic of epistemic activities

Youth Work Practice	Knowledge/Competencies	Professionalism
• Keep the youth in order, take care of stuff and be respectful • Learning progress, keep up with changes in society • Organising activities • Talking about what you do, external communication • Being a good role model • Building relationships between YW and youth	• Knowledge of different age stages • Knowledge of social classes • General knowledge of the society you work in, knowledge about people you work with • Knowledge about laws and rules regarding YW • Conflict management • Communicational skills • Authoritative • Budget management • Keeping up with new trends	• Treating everyone the same • Take initiative over children • Knowing your own limits • Knowing where your profession ends and when to refer to someone • Being able to set boundaries for kids

Phronetic activities

In phronetic activities the youth have the most knowledge about what is important in the activities. The youth worker protects the young people from unwanted influence and identification with the organisation. The fulfillment of the goals of the youth is central and therefore the youth worker directs the activities where the youth want. This means that the activities can have many different directions. In phronetic activities, the organisation's pursuit of a certain social and political order is challenged. The overall aim is to increase the youth's freedom of action. Examples of the logic of the epistemic activities are presented in table 6.

Table 6. Examples of the logic of phronetic activities

Youth Work Practice	Knowledge/Competencies	Professionalism
• Talk to youths, include them in the work and activities • Listening to their need • Deal with intercultural problems • Using the strength of the kids	• Youth empowerment • Being open minded – empathy • Being adaptable • Willing to learn more • Curiosity and genuine interest in children • Helpful, be at the same level as them • Not being afraid (of changes, not knowing, being wrong…) • Tolerance and patience • Being open to change and being adjustable	• Have a feeling for the need of the kids • Reflecting on what happens • Setting yourself aside, not you it is all about • Being aware of the community you work in • Being able to work with all colleagues

Nomadic activities

Nomadic activities are about the meeting between different knowledges and to create spaces for encounters between knowledges. The youth worker has a "mediating" position in these encounters. The nomadic activities are about creating new knowledge and new common interests. The activities are a product of various encounters between people. Examples of the logic of the nomadic activities is presented in table 7.

Table 7. Examples of the logic of nomadic activities

Youth Work Practice	Knowledge/Competencies	Professionalism
• Talk to youths, include them in the work and activities • Listening to their need • Deal with intercultural problems • Using the strength of the kids	• Being open minded – empathy • Being adaptable • Willing to learn more • Curiosity and genuine interest in children • Helpful, be at the same level as them • Not being afraid (of changes, not knowing, being wrong…) • Tolerance and patience • Being open to change and being adjustable • Innovation	• Making and welcoming a neutral space

In table 8 the logics of the different activities are summarized.

	Epistemic	Phronetic	Nomadic
WHAT?	The activities are based on the overall organisation and its cultural-political ideas about how the future should be shaped.	The activities are controlled by the youth.	The activities are about creating new ideas and providing an atmosphere where new ideas can be created.
HOW?	To discipline the youth.	To listen to the youth and help them make their case.	To create space for new combinations of people and ideas.
WHY?	Create intellectual and cultural order that maintains social and political order.	To give the youth a voice to change the prevailing cultural order and thereby challenge the existing social and political order.	To create something new using a combination of people and ideas. Create new social and political order.

Concluding thoughts

In this report we have presented results from focus group discussions involving youth workers from four different countries. The discussions were held in both national and cross-national groups. In analysing the results, we found two logics that are well known and often discussed in youth work. We decided to name them "epistemic" and "phronetic" epistemologies of youth work. They represent fundamental different ways of understanding what youth work is, what it is for and how it should be done.

Many youth workers would no doubt derive their view of and commitment to open youth activities from a mixture of these forms. In that sense, the typology represents a repertoire of epistemological forms which in turn generate new possibilities to not only understand and explain what open youth activity is, but also what it does. Against the background of late modern social development and the shift from organized to self-organized leisure activities that often accompany people's ongoing identity building, we also dare to say that the youth worker's role as mediator needs to become more widespread, or at least more visible. Namely, there is every reason to believe that there is a connection between the choice of epistemological perspective in open youth activities and the transformations that take place in terms of democratic development at the societal level. Nomadic youth activities contribute to democratic cultures where deliberation and participation are highly valued. Some would express it as the production of ideas being democratized (see e.g. Osborne 2006). Others would say that it is about laying the foundations for a more participatory democracy and ultimately also a more equal democracy (cf. Coussée 2016) where participation is not limited to an elite.

However, the development of a more equal democracy also involves a change in our perception of what young people's knowledge can and should be for. We thus need to change the focus from the construction of knowledge to the production of knowledge and discuss the impact of open youth activities. Understanding the different effects of epistemic, phronetic and nomadic knowledge models is about understanding the effect of the different methods youth worker use to implement open youth activities. The implication is that youth workers' way of working in open youth activities creates new realities that were not there before the activity was carried out. Youth worker' use of

different methods of participation create different "rooms" for decision-making in open youth activities. An ever-present question in these "rooms" should be which hierarchical divisions between people are maintained or transgressed? In addition, it is important to be aware that all participatory processes take place in situations that are shaped by previous beliefs about participation in decision-making. Often there are some who are used to voice their thoughts while there are others who have previously been ignored and completely deprived of their capacity to participate in decision-making processes.

What emerges in this report is that epistemic models of knowledge often confirm and support existing divisions between young people who participate and young people who do not participate, while phronetic and nomadic models of knowledge question these divisions. While epistemic knowledge models are about improving the activity and its decision-making processes, phronetic and nomadic knowledge models are about how open youth activities can be relevant to a variety of actors. In contrast to the value-rational approach of the phronetic knowledge model, the nomadic knowledge model is characterized by controversy. In other words, there is an absence of agreed knowledge and a multitude of actors involved. The purpose of the nomadic knowledge model is thus to symbiotically produce new ideas. In this perspective, ideas have no rightful owner. Rather, ideas are products that emerge from various negotiations. It is therefore not in the nature of either the phronetic or the nomadic model of knowledge to simply pursue the questions of the organisation. While the former is about focusing on the interests of young people because the youth activities exist for and with young people, the latter is about creating communication flows between different interests because the youth activities exists for and with new solutions.

What goes on in nomadic youth activities is not autonomous knowledge production but a situated and immanent consultation process between deviant ideas. In the social sciences, these processes are sometimes referred to as "hybrid forums" (see e.g. Callon et al. 2009). Usually, they are understood as controversies where both the limitation in youth worker's knowledge and the relevance of young people's knowledge are recognized and where uncertainties and contradictions are discussed in a context of broadened participation. It is only when the knowledge of all parties is accepted as relevant that these controversies can be managed, and robust solutions emerge.

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