

The **International Youth Work** module is brought to you by Léargas and the National Youth Council of Ireland in collaboration with Maynooth University, Ireland.



UNIT 1:

What is International Youth Work?

A European Programmes Perspective

OVERVIEW OF MODULE

The International Youth Work module is designed to enhance your understanding of international youth work within the context of European programmes such as Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps. It explores what is meant by international youth work in this context as well as the impact of engagement in these programmes on youth workers, organisations and young people. The module highlights the contribution of such engagement in bringing added value to quality youth work. It is designed to develop the capacity of those involved in youth work to bring an international dimension to their work within their own specific contexts.

It consists of three units:

UNIT 1: What is International Youth Work?

UNIT 2: Why Engage in International Youth Work?

UNIT 3: How to Engage in International Youth Work

WELCOME TO UNIT 1:

Please watch the Unit 1 Video before proceeding further.

Setting the Scene –

What we mean by international youth work.

What you will learn

In this unit you will learn about:

- International youth work within the context of Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps.
- Policies that underpin youth work at a national and European level.
- What international youth work looks like in practice: the variety of activities that can take place under Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps as well as project examples.
- The impact of international youth work (introduced here and explored further in Unit 2).
- The support available from Léargas, the National Agency for Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps, and the National Youth Council of Ireland to access funding and develop an international dimension to youth work (explored further in Unit 3).
- How to document the learning from international youth work (Youthpass introduced here and explored further in Unit 3).



UNIT 1: What is International Youth Work?

Introduction

International youth work is about young people experiencing and participating in the wider world. It is about those working with young people and youth organisations from different countries cooperating with each other.

International youth work is supported by the European Union (EU) through programmes such as Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps. These programmes are based on the values of the EU, such as dignity, human rights, freedom and democracy. They also contribute to the achievement of policies such as the [EU Youth Strategy](#) and the [European Youth Goals](#) at a European level and national policy such as [Better Outcomes Brighter Futures \(BOBF\)](#) and the [National Youth Strategy](#).

In the International Youth Work module, we explore international youth work in the context of Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps. While these are EU programmes, they support projects and the building of partnerships within and beyond Europe. They also support the participation of young people and those working with young people, spanning a diverse range of backgrounds, experiences, countries and cultures, making the activities that take place under these programmes truly international.

2021 sees the rolling out of a new Erasmus+ programme with many opportunities for young people, youth workers and youth organisations to enrich and enhance their work.

In a time of global uncertainty and change, international youth work has never been more relevant. Inclusion, exchange, solidarity, collaboration and youth participation all play a vital role in shaping our societies as we navigate our ever-changing world.

In this unit we address the question “what is international youth work?” in the context of EU programmes such as Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps. We explore the values, policies and principles upon which these programmes are based. We also introduce the impact of these programmes on youth workers, youth organisations and young people as well as the tools available to map learning outcomes, which will be explored further in Unit 3. Lastly, we outline the supports available for those interested in becoming involved in international youth work.

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EU Policy & Processes

International youth work influences and helps to achieve policy objectives and processes aimed at bringing about positive change for young people. The following are some key policy areas relevant to youth work:

EU Youth Strategy

The EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 aims to bring the EU closer to young people and help address issues of concern to them. The Strategy focuses on three main areas:

ENGAGE: Encouraging young people to take part in civic and democratic life.

CONNECT: Connecting young people across the EU and beyond to promote volunteering, opportunities to learn abroad, solidarity and intercultural understanding.

EMPOWER: Supporting young people's empowerment through innovation, quality and recognition of youth work.

The EU Youth Strategy should contribute to realising the vision of young people reflected in the European Youth Goals.

For more on the EU Youth Strategy see:

https://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/youth-strategy_en



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European Youth Goals

The European Youth Goals came about through the 6th cycle of the EU Youth Dialogue process 2017–2018, Youth in Europe: What's Next? The 11 Goals which emerged following consultation with young people across Europe, cover a diverse range of thematic areas and represent areas of concern and importance to young people.

The 11 Goals are:

1. Connecting EU with Youth
2. Equality of all Genders
3. Inclusive Societies
4. Information and Constructive Dialogue
5. Mental Health and Wellbeing
6. Moving Rural Youth Forward
7. Quality Employment for All
8. Quality Learning
9. Space and Participation for All
10. Sustainable Green Europe
11. Youth Organisations & European Programmes

For more on the Youth Goals see:

<https://www.leargas.ie/blog/youth-dialogue-european-youth-goals/>
<http://www.youthconf.at/yg/youthgoals-2>

EU Youth Dialogue

The EU Youth Dialogue is the flagship youth participation mechanism at EU level aiming to bring youth voice to EU policy making. Its main element is the dialogue between young people, youth organisations and policy and decision-makers, as well as experts, researchers and other relevant civil society actors. It serves as a forum for continuous joint reflection and consultation on the priorities, implementation and follow-up of European cooperation in the field of youth. It takes place on a cyclical basis, aligned with the EU Presidency, building on the achievements of past dialogue processes, with the aim of including more decision-makers and young people in the dialogue activities. Particular attention is given to the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities in decision-making processes and in the implementation of the EU Youth Strategy.

For more information on the EU Youth Dialogue see:

https://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/implementation/dialogue_en

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National Policy & Processes

Better Outcomes Brighter Futures 2014–2020

Better Outcomes Brighter Futures is the framework that sets out the Government's agenda and priorities regarding children and young people under the age of 25 and provides for the development and implementation of policies and services with the aim of achieving the following Five outcomes:

ACTIVE AND HEALTHY, PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELL-BEING

(includes healthy lifestyle, taking part in youth work, arts, sports).

ACHIEVING FULL POTENTIAL IN ALL AREAS OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

(includes enhancing skills, competencies and attributes through formal and non-formal education).

SAFE AND PROTECTED FROM HARM (particularly vulnerable and marginalised young people).

ECONOMIC SECURITY AND OPPORTUNITY (including participating in the labour market, enhancing employability skills, training, entrepreneurship, social inclusion and combatting poverty).

CONNECTED, RESPECTED AND CONTRIBUTING TO THE WORLD

(including active citizenship, political, social and civic engagement).

International youth work is an important instrument for organisations to help achieve these outcomes, in particular the Outcome 5: 'Connected, respected and contributing to their world'. This will be discussed further in Unit 2.

For more about Better Outcomes Brighter Futures see:

gov.ie - [Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, 2014-2020 \(www.gov.ie\)](http://gov.ie)



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National Youth Strategy 2015–2020

The National Youth Strategy aims to enable all young people to realise their maximum potential with regard to the outcomes set out in Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures. For example: enhancing employability skills; social inclusion; and active citizenship. It looks to do this by respecting young people's rights and hearing their voices, while protecting and supporting them as they transition from childhood to adulthood.

For more about the National Youth Strategy see:

<https://www.youth.ie/documents/national-youth-strategy-2015-2020>

National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision Making (2015–2020)

This strategy is guided and influenced by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. The goal of the strategy is to ensure that children and young people will have a voice in their individual and collective everyday lives across the five national outcome areas.

For more about the National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision Making see:

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/9128db-national-strategy-on-children-and-young-peoples-participation-in-dec/?referrer=/documents/playandrec/20150617natstratonchildrenandyoungpeoplesparticipationindecisionmaking2015-2020.pdf/>

Please note that these strategies are due for review and renewal in 2021.

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LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy (2018–2020)

This is the first strategy of its kind. It adopts a cross-governmental approach to serving the needs of LGBTI+ people aged 10–24. The strategy draws on Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures and includes three main goals:

- Create a safe, supportive and inclusive environment for LGBTI+ young people.
- Improve the physical, mental and sexual health of LGBTI+ young people.
- Develop the research and data to better understand the lives of LGBTI+ young people.

In September 2020 it was announced that the Strategy would be extended for a further year.

For more about the National LGBTI+ Youth Strategy see:

https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/a6f110-lgbti-national-youth-strategy-2018-2020/?referrer=/documents/publications/odtc_full_eng.pdf/

Connecting EU and National Policy Processes

EU Youth Dialogue at a national level

In Ireland, a National Working Group has overall responsibility for EU Youth Dialogue. Stakeholder representatives include young people; the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY), National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI), Léargas and Maynooth University. NYCI plays a key role in supporting the implementation of EU Youth Dialogue through the engagement of youth organisations, youth workers and young people in the process.

EU Youth Dialogue is delivered by NYCI through the Young Voices programme in Ireland. It uses dynamic and innovative approaches in engagement with young people and those who work with them.

Young Voices encourages participation, promotes equal participation, includes diverse voices, strengthens young peoples' citizenship competences and sense of belonging and ultimately aims to bring about positive change.

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Young people from the EU Youth Dialogue Working Group have a formal and direct engagement with the Children and Young People's Policy Consortium in identifying issues of importance to their peers and feeding back on the recommendations identified through the process. This is part of the implementation structures for Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures which directly involves children and young people in its oversight.

The Children and Young People's Policy Consortium was established to have oversight of and drive cross-Government implementation of Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures, and represents the keystone in the implementation infrastructure. The Consortium comprises high-level representation from Government Departments and agencies, key experts and representatives from a range of sectors and settings working with children and young people. It is chaired by the Secretary General of the DCEDIY and reports annually to the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy.

Find out more about how to get involved in Young Voices – EU Youth Dialogue here:

<https://www.youth.ie/programmes/projects-initiatives/young-voices/>

Find out more about connecting international youth work to policy here:

<https://www.leargas.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/123-of-Youth-Policy-2018.pdf>

Engaging with Interactive Video Content:

International youth work – what it looks like in practice

International youth work is an innovative and exciting approach to working with young people and enhancing the competencies of youth workers and young people alike, offering unique and valuable experiences.

The opportunities are wide and varied. As noted, for the purposes of this module we are focusing on international youth work within the context of Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps. In Erasmus+, young people are individuals aged between 13–30. Young people aged between 18–30 can take part in the European Solidarity Corps.

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It would be reasonable to assume that all international youth work takes place at an international or European level. However, opportunities to engage in international youth work exist at various levels including local, national, European and beyond.

The essence of international youth work is not where you are but rather who you are connecting with and what issues you are connecting on.

There is a wide range of activities that can take place as part of international youth work including, but not limited to:

- Youth exchanges
- Youth worker training
- Organisations building partnerships with others
- Volunteering in Ireland and abroad
- Running a local solidarity project which allows groups of young people to make a change in their local community
- Youth participation in decision making at a local, national and European level

See the next section which provides more information on the European programmes that support these activities as well as project examples.



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European Programmes Supporting International Youth Work

Erasmus+

The new Erasmus+ programme (2021–2027) is broadly separated into two Key Actions. Key Action 1 provides mobility opportunities for individuals, including young people and youth workers as well as projects focussed on youth participation. Key Action 2 provides opportunities for the development of cooperation partnerships across various organisations and fields. Each of the actions are connected and informed by the European Union Youth Strategy 2019–2027 and the core areas of action ‘Engaging, Connecting and Empowering young people’.



Key priorities under the new Erasmus+ programme include:

- Inclusion and diversity
- Sustainability, environment and climate goals
- Digital transformations.



Additional priorities for the youth field include:

- Participation in democratic life
- Recognition of non-formal and informal learning.



Erasmus+ seeks to promote equal opportunities and access, inclusion, diversity and fairness. This is reflected in the funding structures of the programme as well as the supports available to ensure equal opportunity for participation by all young people. The programme aims to promote values of inclusion and diversity, tolerance, and democratic participation. Inclusion and diversity within Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps are underpinned by dedicated Inclusion and Diversity Strategy [Implementation Guidelines](#) which provide an enabling framework for inclusion and diversity projects. The strategy seeks to promote diversity of all kinds as a valuable source of learning and strives to equip programme stakeholders to interact positively with diverse people from different backgrounds, in all types of projects. At a national level, a dedicated Inclusion Officer works with Léargas to promote and implement this priority. Further, NYCI's International programme works closely with the NYCI Equality and Intercultural programme to support youth organisations to implement inclusion and diversity in their international youth work projects.

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Key Action 1 – Mobility Opportunities

Key Action 1 focusses on non-formal and informal learning to enable young people to acquire essential competences that contribute to their personal and socio-educational development and foster their active participation in society. These mobilities aim to have a significantly positive impact on young people as well as on the organisations involved, the communities in which these activities take place and in the youth field more broadly.

The following Actions are supported:

- Mobility Projects for Youth Workers
- Youth Exchanges
- Youth Participation Activities.

Mobility Project for Youth Workers



This Action supports the professional development of youth workers and thereby the development of quality youth work at local, regional, national, European, and international level, through non-formal and informal learning experiences in mobility activities.

Activities can include:

- Study visits and assignments
- Networking and community building
- Training courses
- Seminars and workshops.



The action contributes to the objectives of the EU Youth Strategy 2019–2027, particularly to the European Youth Work Agenda for quality, innovation, and recognition of youth work.

Youth Worker Mobilities aim to:

- Provide non-formal and informal learning opportunities for professional development of youth workers, contributing to high quality individual practice as well as to the evolution of youth work organisations and systems.
- Build a community of youth workers that can support the quality of projects and activities for young people in EU programmes and beyond.

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Project Example

Cloughjordan Community Farm | €11,843.00 | 12 months | 2020

'Sustainability youth projects' is a Youth Worker Mobility that aims to provide a peer learning training to design new youth projects in eco villages and sustainability projects. This project involves 10 partners, representing nine programme countries (Ireland, Spain, Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Bulgaria, Estonia, Denmark and the UK). All participating organisations are connected through the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) and have had previous collaborations. The mobility project is hosted in Cloughjordan eco village for four days and involve 18 participants, nine of whom are participants with fewer opportunities. The main objective of this project is to increase quality and quantity of sustainability youth projects in eco villages through the professional development of youth workers.



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Mobility Projects for Young People – Youth Exchanges

This Action supports non-formal learning opportunities for young people aged 13–30 in the form of Youth Exchanges. These projects bring young people together from at least two different countries for up to 21 days to exchange, explore topics of interest and learn. The objective is to engage and empower young people to become active citizens, connect to European concepts and values as well as to help them acquire and develop competences for life and their professional future. The Action is open to all young people, with a special focus on those with fewer opportunities.

Youth Exchanges aim to:

- Foster intercultural dialogue and feeling of being European
- Develop skills and attitudes of young people
- Strengthen European values and break down prejudices and stereotypes
- Raise awareness about socially relevant topics and thus stimulate engagement in society and active participation.

Project Example

Limerick Youth Service | €15,528 | 10 months | 2019

This project involved a Youth Exchange between Ireland and Finland supporting 26 young people (aged 15–20) to attend a Youth Exchange in Ireland. The project aimed to bring a wider experience of leadership to the young people involved. At the time of the project, young people were engaged in a 10-month programme to be junior leaders. Having a European element to the training helped the participants to gain a different understanding of what leadership is about and provided a European context for their learning.



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Youth Participation Activities

The new Erasmus+ programme will support youth-driven, local and transnational participation projects run by informal groups of young people and/or youth organisations. The activities take place outside of formal education and training and may take the form of workshops, seminars, events, awareness raising campaigns consultation events etc.

The aim of the activities is to encourage youth participation in Europe's democratic life at local, regional, national and European level and to connect to one or more of the following objectives:

- Provide young people with opportunities to engage and learn to participate in civic society (aiming for a meaningful civic, economic, social, cultural and political participation of young people from all backgrounds, including those with fewer opportunities).
- Raise young people's awareness about European common values including fundamental rights and contribute to the European integration process, including through contribution to the achievement of one or more of the European Youth Goals.
- Develop young people's digital competences and media literacy with a view to increasing young people's resilience to disinformation, fake news and propaganda.
- Bring together young people and decision makers at local, regional, national and transnational level and/or contribute to the EU Youth Dialogue.

Project Example

NYCI Youth Led "Youth Check" project | €5,351 | 6 months | 2017

A group of young people, from the Young Voices – EU Youth Dialogue process, led the Youth Check project. Supported by the National Youth Council of Ireland, the young people considered the recommendations from the Young Voices – EU Youth Dialogue process to explore ways of implementing these at a national level.

They decided to explore the potential for a 'Youth Check' in Ireland. A youth check is an impact assessment tool designed for policy makers and government to consider the impact of any new policy or legislation that is relevant to young people.

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A core group of young people took responsibility for undertaking research, connecting with other Youth Councils in Europe and applying for Erasmus+ funding to host an international seminar in Ireland with input from young people from three other EU countries where Youth Check was in place or being considered.

They brought young people and policy makers together, inviting guests from decision-making structures in Ireland and met in the (then) Department of Children and Youth Affairs with the Policy Innovation Unit and the Minister. The project produced a two day international seminar, a youth-friendly report and the young people presented to the Policy Consortium on Children and Young People.

<https://www.youth.ie/documents/youth-check-report-for-web-final-june-2018/>



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Key Action 2 – Partnerships for Cooperation

This Action enables participating organisations to gain experience in international cooperation, to strengthen their capacities and to produce high-quality innovative deliverables. Partnerships for Cooperation can be of different sizes and scope and adapt their activities accordingly, depending on the objectives of the project, the participating organisations involved, or the expected impact, among other elements.

Two types of partnerships are offered to organisations to work, learn and grow together:

Cooperation Partnerships Aims

- Increasing quality in the work, activities and practices of organisations, institutions or sectors involved, opening up to new actors, not naturally included within one sector.
- Building capacity of organisations to work transnationally and across sectors.
- Addressing common needs and priorities in the fields of education, training, youth and sport.
- Enabling transformation and change (at individual, organisational or sectoral level), leading to improvements and new approaches, in proportion to the context of each organisation.

Small-scale Partnerships Aims

- Attract and widen access for newcomers to the programme and small-scale actors. These partnerships should act as a first step for organisations into cooperation at European level.
- Support the inclusion of target groups with fewer opportunities.
- Support active European citizenship and bring the European dimension to the local level.

Project Examples

Maynooth University | €189,107.88 | 31 months | 2016

The Youth Work eLearning Partnership (YWeLP) involved Ireland, Finland Estonia, UK (Northern Ireland) and Australia. The project designed and hosts digital curriculum materials on youth work themes – communicating youth work, youth participation and non-formal learning, ethics and human rights in youth work, youth work in diverse societies and youth work in a digital world. <https://www.youthworkandyou.org/>

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Accreditation

Under the new Erasmus+ programme, organisations that wish to take part in the Mobility strand (Key Action 1) can now apply for Accreditation. Accredited organisations have simplified access to funding opportunities, and are provided with an alternative to the individual application process. Accreditation is primarily for organisations with relevant experience and capacity, that plan to regularly carry out projects. Accreditation is not mandatory. Organisations can still take part in Erasmus+ by applying for individual projects.

More information can be found in Unit 3 and here:

[Erasmus Accreditation \(leargas.ie\)](https://leargas.ie)

[What, Who and How of Erasmus Youth Accreditation by leargas.ie – issuu](https://leargas.ie)



European Solidarity Corps

The European Solidarity Corps (ESC) aims to promote solidarity as a value, through high quality activities, engaging young people and organisations to contribute to cohesion, solidarity, democracy and citizenship in Europe. The ESC also aims to respond to societal challenges and strengthen communities, with a particular effort to promote social inclusion. Young people between 18 and 30 years who are legally residing in a participating country and have registered in the [European Solidarity Corps Portal](https://leargas.ie) are eligible.

To achieve its objectives, the European Solidarity Corps implements the following strand of Actions:



Volunteering

Volunteering is a solidarity activity that takes place in-country or cross-border in the form of a full-time, voluntary, unpaid activity for a period of up to 12 months. It provides young people with the opportunity to contribute to the daily work of organisations in solidarity activities to the ultimate benefit of the communities within which the activities are carried out. Volunteering can take the form of individual volunteering or volunteering teams and can take place in-country or cross-border. Specific measures of the programme encourage and support the participation of young people with fewer opportunities.

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Project Example

Donegal Youth Service | €74,468 | 24 months | 2018

Donegal Youth Service operates a range of specific core projects such as The Youth Outreach Project, Daybreak, Youth Information, Breakout, LOFT Health Café, and Teen Talk. This project ran over two years and involved six volunteers working strategically across an integrated Youth Service. Running a two-year project allowed the organisation to measure the impact of the project in relation to long-term desired outcomes. An underlying objective was to allow young people to immerse themselves in a new culture and gain new skills, resulting in benefits for the organisation, the volunteers and the local community.

Solidarity Projects

A Solidarity Project is an in-country solidarity activity initiated, developed, and implemented by young people themselves for a period of 2 to 12 months. It gives a group of minimum five young persons the chance to express solidarity by taking responsibility and committing themselves to bring positive change in their local community. The project should have a clearly identified topic which the group of young people wish to explore together, and which must be translated into the concrete daily activities of the project and involve all the participants.

A group of young people who plan a solidarity project can seek support from an organisation (any public or private body). An organisation may apply on their behalf for a grant under the European Solidarity Corps. The role of the organisation should be mainly administrative, to support the group in the project life-cycle administrative and financial tasks. However, it can also offer support and guidance in identifying and documenting learning outcomes. Young people carrying out a Solidarity Project may be supported by a coach. A coach is a resource person, who could have youth work experience, to accompany the young people and support their participation.



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Project Example

Central Remedial Clinic | €19,732 | 12 months | 2020

This application from a group of five young people sets out to highlight and address the lack of opportunities for young people with disabilities. The group of young people with mixed abilities and their peers plan to carry out a number activities over nine months. These include participation in “mainstream” activities e.g. Higher Options events and other activities focused on highlighting the exclusion or isolation of young people with disabilities. The group will carry out talks with the community and voluntary sector to identify volunteering opportunities, enhance their skills and engage with these organisations in solidarity. Project participants plan to share their findings with representatives of relevant Departments, the National Council for Special Education and the National Disability Authority.

Quality Label

In order to participate in the Volunteering Strand of the European Solidarity Corps, organisations are required to obtain a Quality Label. This is not needed for Solidarity Projects.

This is required to ensure compliance of the participating organisations with the principles and objectives of the European Solidarity Corps, as regards their responsibilities during all stages of solidarity activities. All organisations holding a Quality Label gain access to the European Solidarity Corps database. More information can be found in Unit 3 and here:

[Quality label | Youth \(europa.eu\)](https://europa.eu/quality-label/)

Supporting International Youth Work

Léargas

Léargas manage international and national exchange programmes in education, youth and community work, and vocational education and training. They are the National Agency for Erasmus+ Youth and the European Solidarity Corps. Léargas has built a national and international reputation for effectively managing significant levels of funding to support international collaboration and exchange as well as a reputation for a friendly and supportive approach to programme applicants and beneficiaries. Many supports are available for those interested in bringing a new dimension to their youth work and becoming involved Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps.

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Léargas regularly holds information sessions and workshops as well as specific clinics to guide those, who are ready to apply for funding, through the application process. Léargas also collaborates with youth organisations including NYCI to explore various thematic issues in the youth field.

For more information on the work of Léargas see:

www.leargas.ie and [Léargas YouTube channel](#)

Funding Available

Depending on the type of project being carried out, funding is available for numerous aspects of your project including but not limited to:

- Travel
- Organisational support
- Project management and implementation
- Transnational project meetings
- Exceptional costs
- Special needs supports.

For specific information on funding available see:

Erasmus+ Programme Guide

www.leargas.ie

European Solidarity Corps Programme Guide

www.leargas.ie



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The National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI)

NYCI is the representative body for voluntary youth organisations in Ireland. It uses its collective experience to act on issues that impact on young people.

Through its International programme, NYCI aims to facilitate and promote an international dimension to the work of youth organisations and supports young people's involvement in international activities, youth work and youth policy.

Through NYCI programmes, including Equality & Intercultural, Development Education, Child Protection, Youth Arts, Youth Health, STEAM & Digital Youth Work and International, NYCI runs international seminars, best practice exchange and training opportunities for young people, youth organisations and youth workers, promoting opportunities for engagement in International youth work.

NYCI supports young people and youth organisations to influence policy, through its International programme and the EU Youth Dialogue (as outlined above). NYCI leads on the EU Youth Dialogue process in Ireland, engaging youth organisations and young people in the process through Young Voices events, consultations, reports and youth representation.

<https://www.youth.ie/programmes/projects-initiatives/young-voices/>

Member organisations of NYCI can nominate representatives to the International Advisory Committee, which advises and makes proposals to the Board of NYCI on international policy and activities and facilitates and promotes the involvement of member organisations in international activities. Representatives from the Young Voices EU Youth Dialogue process in Ireland can also join.

In partnership with Léargas, NYCI develops best practice standards for international opportunities and quality guidelines in the provision of international opportunities for young people.

NYCI is a member of and facilitates youth representatives to the European Youth Forum, a platform for youth organisations in Europe, representing over 100 organisations. The European Youth Forum works to empower young people to participate actively in society to improve their own lives by representing and advocating their needs and interests and those of their organisations to the EU Institutions.

To find out more about NYCI see:

<https://www.youth.ie/programmes/international/get-involved-in-the-international-programme/>

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The Impact of International Youth Work

The impact of International youth work on young people, youth workers and youth organisations will be covered in greater detail in Unit 2.

However, below we outline some key statistics from research conducted into the impact of the Erasmus+ programme.

Impact on Young People



International youth work provides opportunities for cooperation among young people from different countries on issues that affect them. By promoting interaction and communication, international youth work contributes to understanding, intercultural learning and youth participation.

Transnational research (Böhler et al, 2020) conducted across 31 countries and involving 23,571 participants shows the impact that Erasmus+ projects had on young people.

For example:

97% agreed or strongly agreed that they are interested in contributing to youth policy development.

94% agreed or strongly agreed that participation in Erasmus+ had improved their ability to cooperate in a team.

90% agreed or strongly agreed that they were better able to negotiate joint solutions where there are different viewpoints.

88% agreed or strongly agreed that they were better at relating to people who are different to them.

87% agreed or strongly agreed that they felt more self-confident.

85% agreed or strongly agreed that that they were better able to identify opportunities for personal and professional development.



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Impact on Youth Workers

International youth work also provides opportunities for youth workers to learn, enhance their skills and competences and ultimately strengthen youth work.

Transnational research (Böhler et al, 2020) across 31 countries and involving 5,007 participants showed the impact that Erasmus+ projects had on project leaders.

For example:

95% of project leaders agreed or strongly agreed that they had learned to better work in an international team.

93% agreed or strongly agreed that they had learned more about how to actively involve young people in youth work.

Impact on Organisations

The impact on organisations is also clear from findings in the same transnational research (Böhler et al, 2020) outlined above.

For example:

90% of project leaders agreed or strongly agree that their organisation has increased appreciation for cultural diversity through their project.

87% of project leaders agreed or strongly agree that their organisation has increased competences for the provision of non-formal education.

80% of project leaders agreed or strongly agree that their organisation has increased commitment to include young people with fewer opportunities.

https://www.researchyouth.net/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/RAY-MON_Research-Report_20200401.pdf (Research conducted by the RAY Network between 2017 and 2018).

For more facts and figures on the impact of the Erasmus+ programme see:

<https://www.researchyouth.net/facts/>

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Documenting Your Learning

YouthPass

Youthpass is a tool to document and recognise learning outcomes from youth work and solidarity activities. It is available for projects funded by Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps. It is a part of the European Commission's strategy to foster the recognition of non-formal learning, putting policy into practice and practice into policy:

- While creating their Youthpass certificate together with a support person, project participants are given the possibility to describe what they have done in their project and which competences they have acquired. Thus, Youthpass supports **reflection upon the personal non-formal learning process and outcomes**.
- As a Europe-wide recognition instrument for non-formal learning in the youth field, Youthpass strengthens the **social recognition of youth work**.
- Youthpass supports **active European citizenship** of young people and of youth workers by describing the added value of their project.
- Youthpass also aims at supporting the **employability** of young people and of youth workers by raising their awareness of and helping to describe their competences, and by documenting their acquisition of key competences on a certificate.

To date over one million Youthpass Certificates have been issued.

To find out more see <https://www.youthpass.eu/en/>

Skills Summary

Another opportunity for young people and youth workers to document the learning of international youth work is through Skills Summary, an online tool that measures the skills young people gain by participating in non-formal education, such as volunteering, youth work and other out-of-school opportunities. Skills Summary supports dialogue between a young person and a youth worker or mentor. It can be used as a self-assessment and self-reflection tool for young people and as a measurement tool for organisations.

Visit NYCI's Skill Summary [Resources page](#) for helpful resources and inspiration about how to include Skills Summary in your youth work practice.

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National Youth Council of Ireland (2020)
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Available at: <https://www.youth.ie/programmes/international/get-involved-in-the-international-programme/> (accessed 25 November 2020).

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Links to Further Information and Reading

Below you will find a range of resources to deepen your engagement with the unit's focus on the distinctive features and priorities of international youth work, the policies and European programmes that support it and its impact.

Articles/Books/Reports

CoE and EU Youth Partnership (2017), *T-Kit 8: Social Inclusion*.

Available at: <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47262484/T-Kit+8+Social+inclusion+WEB.pdf/ab8390b6-2d9e-f831-bbcf-85972152e6e0>

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Available at: <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/learning-mobility-2>

Hofmann-van de Poll, F., Pelzer, M., Riedle, S. and Rottach, A. (2020) *The European Discussion on Youth Work 2015-2020* Muchen: Deutsches Jugendinstitut Centre for European Youth Policy.

Available at: [2020 DJI EuropeanDiscussiononYouthWork.pdf](https://www.dji.eu/2020/DJI-EuropeanDiscussiononYouthWork.pdf) ([eywc2020.eu](https://www.dji.eu/2020/DJI-EuropeanDiscussiononYouthWork.pdf))

SALTO, *Beyond Disabilities- European Mobilities for All: A practical guide for organisations interested in European mobility activities involving young people with disabilities*.

Available at: https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-173652/Guide_Erasmusplus_Mobility_Disability_EN.pdf

SALTO Inclusion and Diversity (2018), *Cookbook for Inclusion:*

Recipes for National Agencies who want to reach more Young People with Fewer Opportunities.

Available at: <https://www.salto-youth.net/downloads/4-17-3810/Cookbook%20on%20Inclusion.pdf>

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Williamson, H. (2020) *Cornerstone Challenges for European Youth Work and Youth Work in Europe Making the Connections and Bridging the Gaps: Some preparatory thoughts for planning the 3rd European Youth Work Convention and implementing the European Youth Work Agenda*, 3rd European Youth Work Convention.

Available at: [Challenges for Youth Work Howard Williamson.pdf \(eywc2020.eu\)>](https://www.eywc2020.eu/eywc2020.eu/Challenges%20for%20Youth%20Work%20Howard%20Williamson.pdf)

Websites and Web Resources

EU-CoE Youth Partnership- co-operation programme between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of youth
<https://pjp-eu.coe.int/en/web/youth-partnership/about-us>

Eurodesk

[Eurodesk Ireland – Information on summer work, volunteering and travelling in Europe](#)

European Youth Work Agenda, German Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth, 2020,
<https://www.eywc2020.eu/en/agenda/resources/>

National Youth Council of Ireland Equality and Intercultural Programme

[Equality & Intercultural - National Youth Council of Ireland](#)

SALTO Youth Resource Centres

<https://www.salto-youth.net/rc/>

Youth Goals Lab, 2020, *Dialogue activities to implement the Youth Goals together: Tool Box*

https://youth-goals.eu/wp-content/uploads/Youth_Goals_Toolbox

Youth Work eLearning Platform

[YWeLP Project - YouthWorkAndYou.org](#)

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Summary

This unit has outlined a number of features of international youth work in the context of European programmes such as Erasmus+ and the European Solidarity Corps. These programmes are closely aligned with and provide a tool for the achievement of both national and European youth policy objectives. Engagement in international youth work provides an opportunity to work across borders and cultures, to broaden horizons, build skills and find solutions to common challenges and issues affecting young people and youth organisations. International youth work has the potential to have a significant impact on those who engage in it, including youth workers, youth organisations and of course young people themselves.

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A European Programmes Perspective

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