



# STRATEGIC PLANNING IN DEMOCRATIC YOUTH WORK

Handbook for designing youth work activities to  
promote democracy and fight discrimination

# imprint

## Eastern Europe Open Boundaries

### Coordination

AGJF Sachsen e. V.

**Content Responsibility** → MUT – Rassismusprävention. Demokratiebildung in Jugendarbeit und angrenzenden Arbeitsfeldern

**Administrative Coordination** → Uferlos – Kampagne zur Aktivierung der Internationalen Jugendarbeit im Freistaat Sachsen

### Partners

A.D.E.L. (Slovakia), Active Youth (Lithuania), Dobra Wola (Poland), ICRP (Hungary), Right Challenge (Portugal), Walk together (Bulgaria)

### Publisher → AGJF Sachsen e. V.

Strategic Partnership „Eastern Europe Open Boundaries“

Neefestraße 82

09119 Chemnitz

[www.agjf-sachsen.de](http://www.agjf-sachsen.de)

**Layout and Design** → Mathias Engert ([www.cmykey.de](http://www.cmykey.de))

**Photos** → Partners, [www.pixabay.com](http://www.pixabay.com), Mathias Engert

**Editing** → Romy Nowak



Gefördert im Rahmen des Landesprogramms 'Welttoffenes Sachsen für Demokratie und Toleranz'



Diese Maßnahme wird mitfinanziert durch Steuermittel auf der Grundlage des von den Abgeordneten des Sächsischen Landtags beschlossenen Haushaltes.



Erasmus+

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union



# why to read this brochure?

<input type="radio"/>	You are working with youth.
<input type="radio"/>	Young people you work with show non-democratic attitudes themselves or are confronted with them in their environment.
<input type="radio"/>	You want to tackle these problematic attitudes but you do not know where to start.
<input type="radio"/>	You already address issues related to discrimination, homophobia, racism etc. with young people but you cannot really tell if your attempts are successful
<input type="radio"/>	You want to know what strategic planning is and how to apply it to youth work contexts.
<input type="radio"/>	You want to learn what a Logic Model is and how it can help in conceptualizing your pedagogical activities
<input type="radio"/>	You want to set pedagogical goals professionally and learn what it takes to make them reachable
<input type="radio"/>	You are asking yourself which contents and methods fit to your working contexts and are suitable for the young people you work with

# table of contents

“Eastern Europe Open Boundaries” . . . . .	2
The Participating Organizations . . . . .	3
European Youth Work in the Spirit of Emancipation . . . . .	4
Strategic Planning in Youth Work . . . . .	6
Logic Models as Tools for Planning and Evaluation . . . . .	8
Step 1: Analysing the Situation . . . . .	10
Step 2: Setting Goals . . . . .	12
Step 3: Defining a Framework . . . . .	14
Step 4: Checking the Results . . . . .	16

# “Eastern Europe Open Boundaries”

---

This handbook has been developed in the strategic partnership “Eastern Europe Open Boundaries”. The main objective of this strategic partnership is to contribute to the enhancement of quality of youth work in the specific field of racism and violence behaviors, antidemocratic, nationalistic and populist tendencies among youth, in particular in the eastern European countries. Aim of the project is to strengthen organizations for the promotion of democracy and the prevention of racism and right-wing populism. By developing and implementing instruments for combating group-related refusals such as racism and anti-Semitism as well as sexism and homophobia. This innovative measures developed during the project are intended as professionalization and enhancement of quality standard among organisations of youth work and their professionals.

A group of seven international partners with expertise in the field has worked out conceptual material for qualification processes as well as for the individual design of activities. When youth workers want to promote democratic understanding and reduce discriminations they need a professional grid which leads them to a practicable concept for their target groups. This professional grid is first of all a specific qualification. But youth workers also need tools to construct good projects and processes.

The innovative element of this handbook is that it does not preset contents and methods for these processes. Rather it enables professionals to work out their own approaches for individual situations. The goal is to ensure that youth workers recognize that democratic education can take place any time and in accordance with the young people’s interests.

# The Participating Organizations

---

**AGJF Sachsen e.V.** is an umbrella organization for youth work in Saxony that realizes trainings, conferences, exchange programmes and consulting for professionals. For more than 10 years it engages actively in quality enhancement in the field of democratic youth work and dealing with racism and discrimination.

**Active Youth** Association (Asociacija "Aktyvus jaunimas") is a non-profit organization based in Kaunas that unites young leaders from Lithuania willing to work on a voluntary basis to facilitate an intercultural dialogue and enhance competence of the European youth.

**A.D.E.L. Slovakia** is active in the field of youth and adult education as holders but also as partners of different projects in Slovakia and abroad. ADEL works both, on local and international level and activities and projects include on international level: youth exchanges, trainings, seminars, conferences, simulations of international organizations.

**Dobra Wola** is a polish association with the main objective to support young people and children, especially from poor families, and fight for the rights of these people. In particular, the foundation supports the change in Belarus, helps Belarusians from Poland and from Belarus.

The **Institute for Cultural Relations Policy (ICRP)** is a non-governmental and non-profit organisation fostering scientific education and public discourse regarding cultural relations policy. It focuses on global intercultural dialogue, the promotion and protection of International Human Rights, the recognition of cultural diversity and religious and minority issues.

The **RIGHTCHALLENGE** Association is a non-governmental organization which aims at the promotion of education, training, culture and sport as a means of social inclusion and equal opportunities in Portugal.

Association **WalkTogether** general scope is to offer high quality non-formal education to adults and young people, covering the three main areas of non-formal education: is socio-cultural (popular) education, education for personal development and professional training. The non-governmental organisation is established by a group of trainers wishing to contribute to a responsible, skilled and aware society in Bulgaria.

# European Youth Work in the Spirit of Emancipation



This paper was developed by MUT-work field for advanced training, counselling and strategic development in cooperation with Prof. Dr. Albert Scherr. Assisted by the board of AGJF Sachsen. You want to support our positions? Please look here:

[agjf-sachsen.de/unterstuetzungsseite.html](http://agjf-sachsen.de/unterstuetzungsseite.html)

Anti-democratic and inhuman positions and attitudes pose challenges to European societies in general and to Youth Work and Pedagogy in particular. Crisis scenarios are emerging globally. Crisis in politics, democracies and in international conflicts are coming to a head and are changing local relations. Debates were coined by neo-conservative, market-fundamentalist, authoritarian and racist perspectives long before the current debates concerning forced migration and societal changes caused by migration.<sup>1</sup> Through this, societal relations were rearranged along side competitive logics. As a result, nationalism that highlights national interests and questions human rights gained influence across Europe.<sup>2</sup>

As important as an adequate reaction to recent occurrences may be, it is also necessary to develop a strategic approach along collective and societal lines. In this context, youth work is not the solution to the problem, but can be part of the solution. Youth work can offer spaces for democratic learning in which equality and respect can be practised regardless of origin, skin colour or gender. Through this, youth work may offer education in democracy and human rights.<sup>3</sup>

Even though these aspects of youth work are generally underestimated, professionals within the field often have to face the demand for effective measures against racism and far-right attitudes. Especially in crises, youth work is supposed to offer fast and extensive preventative interventions.

This is where a dilemma occurs: youth work is seen as some sort of "fire brigade", meaning a solution for the problem, while simultaneously being questioned in its effectiveness based on past performances in democratic activities and societal relevancy.

Set against this backdrop, the following propositions want to help youth work to be taken seriously and help reflect upon the qualities of youth work and its role as a social and democratic pedagogical profession. Youth work is part of emancipatory structures based on respectful upbringing and critical political education.<sup>4</sup> Through this it is part of the public educational canon aiming at the political maturity of its members.

**1** see Demirovic, Alex (2010): Bildung und Gesellschaftskritik. Zur Produktion kritischen Wissens. In: Lösch, Bettina/Thimmel, Andreas (Hg.) Kritische politische Bildung. Ein Handbuch. Schwalbach/Ts., S. 147

**2** see Scherr, Albert (2009): Nationalismus, Kulturrassismus und Fremdenfeindlichkeit als Resonanzboden einer Politik der Ausgrenzung und Unterordnung. In: Komitee für Grundrechte und Demokratie (Hrsg.): Jenseits der Menschenrechte. Die europäische Flüchtlings- und Migrationspolitik. Münster, S. 196-211

**3** see Scherr, Albert (2018): Jugendarbeit als Menschenrechtsbildung? In: deutsche jugend, H. 6, S. 250-256

**4** see Ahlheim, Klaus/Ahlheim, Rose (2018): Autonomie Statt Gehorsam: Zu einer Erziehung nach Ausschwitz. Ulm, S. 36



- 1 Like other social events, racist and violent incidents in local communities Chemnitz will play a role in the lives of many young people and will suggest certain positions and attitudes. Youth workers have to face those topics openly while simultaneously positioning themselves democratically.
- 2 Nationalist players fancy themselves on the brink of a national coup/overthrow. Like all fundamentalist ideologies they long for civil-war like conditions and societal loss of control to assert political claims. They are not partners in civil debates and democracy. Their actions are strategic and not led by emotions like fear and experiences of deprivation.
- 3 Neo-nazis, nazi-hooligans and other people involved in fascist structures and nationalist forces never were and cannot be the target group of youth work. They cannot be addressed by youth work anymore and are trying to instrumentalise youth work for their own purposes. There is a need for differentiation. Open communication and education spaces within those settings will otherwise be undermined and become prohibited areas for other addressees. Education can only be based on a professional relationship and has to be placed in collectively designed pedagogical alliances.
- 4 Youth work does not provide emergency solutions. It would be fatal to follow the wishes of those demanding youth work to appease the current situation. The frustrating experiences and the devaluation of youth work should not result in an overestimation of its potentials. Local cooperation partners and experts for the promotion of democracy should be included in the development and planning of strategic interventions for youth work. Goal should be the establishment of permanent mutual strategies and activities within well-functioning networks.
- 5 Reductions drawn from extremism theory that propose a "left vs. right" problem neither do justice to analysis by professionals working in the field nor to the democratic commitment against racist and nationalist mobilisations. Youth workers are not an extension of municipal politics. Concepts based on this believe fail to offer utopian and emancipatory dimensions for the promotion of democracy. Youth work that is able to critically analyse the circumstances of its addressees is critical education in the best sense of the word.
- 6 Youth work as critical education has a collective requirement. It is able to mirror individual problem areas within societal relations. Therefore it is able to offer new options for action to young people. As a result, existing mechanisms of power and exclusion are critically reflected.
- 7 Social structures shaped by market interests and hierarchal conflicts cause experiences of marginalisation and crisis for young people. Youth work has to tackle those anti-emancipatory experiences and give room for relief and negotiation.
- 8 Daily endured experiences shape the way we experience things and how we act. Existing fears and experiences of young people are to be taken seriously. However, personal experiences of devaluation cannot justify the negation of human rights or derogatory actions carried out by young people. Although most young people are able to move through public without fear, some are affected by racism and heterosexism and therefore constricted in their mobility.
- 9 Youth work views young people as independent subjects who act autonomously. It recognises the creative ways in which they master their daily lives and assimilate to their social environments. Addressees should be supported in their requirements.
- 10 Youth workers have to regularly reassess their own views on their addressees within a professional context. Young people can be viewed as groups with different dimensions of diversity. Viewing them this way can help to deduce specific needs and enables youth workers to advocate for them. At the same time, addressees remain autonomous individuals. A constant reflection of action should be assured, subsequently a descriptive language for conflict should be applied; even in conflicting situations.
- 11 Youth workers need a clear standpoint based on democratic values and human dignity. This attitude must be orally expressed and be reflected in the composition of settings within the field of work. The goal is to develop a professional habitus that enables youth workers to position themselves within teams, in front of the board of trustees and in interactions with addressees.
- 12 Youth work is part of socio-pedagogical structures that act in the spirit of emancipation with all for all. "Youth work as actively engaged, critical educational work takes the real world and utopia seriously and tries to find concepts in which utopia can become more realistic and reality more pursuant to utopia."<sup>5</sup>
- 13 Conflicts are part of democratic societies. The goal of political discussions within youth work settings is to debate joined and differentiate opposing interests in order to establish ineluctable principles that can be applied to supporting a modern and emancipated society. All parties involved are to position themselves deliberately.
- 14 Youth workers, as well as their surrounding institutions,

have to qualify professional contexts according to those principles. At the same time there is a need for change in perspectives and the work field itself. Political advocacy work as well as the expansion of already established structures are necessary all over Europe to develop appropriate offers.

Professionals within the field of youth work and their political partners collectively have to fight for the required resources. We hope this position paper will act as a touchstone for the demands youth work has to meet on a daily basis. It is important to reflect on cases and situations from practice. Furthermore, experiences of those working in youth work have to be documented. Local surroundings have to be regarded and taken into consideration, cooperations must be established. Only then is it possible to adjust personal positions through reflection and become more critical. This is crucial to the fight for an emancipated society.

- 5 Kentler, Helmut (1970): Jugendarbeit als Aufklärung. In: Müller, C. Wolfgang et al.: Was ist Jugendarbeit. München, S.49

## Strategic Planning in Youth Work

### Characteristics of the Field

Youth Work like every field of social work is characterized by fluidity and complexity. Youth as the target group is not homogenous. For this reason, activities and services must be based on the actual circumstances and individual needs of the young people and should take into account differences arising from gender, ethnicity, culture, health, place of residence, socioeconomic situation and so on. Furthermore these points of references could constantly change. As participation is fixed and stable groups of participants are seldom. Young people use youth work services irregularly and so the topics change according to the current need of who is actually there. Who has participated in a project at its start might not attend it any more in the end and vice versa. Youth work settings are much less formalized and predictable than other educational contexts like school. This makes it far more challenging to plan and implement educational processes strategically.

### The necessity for Strategic Planning

Youth workers hold professional mandates and beliefs, which require them to stimulate and support activities that contribute to young people's personal and social development. Furthermore there are specific potentials for democratic education in youth work settings. Learning is embedded in everyday activities and situations. The holistic, life world oriented approach of youth work enables learning experiences which are more direct than e.g. cognitive-only, abstract learning experiences in school.

### Informal learning

Informal learning arises from the learner's involvement in activities that are not undertaken with a learning purpose in mind.

It is an involuntary and inescapable part of daily life. For that reason, it is sometimes called experiential learning.

It takes place exclusively incidental. That is why planning of informal learning processes is not possible, but youth workers can provide educative settings in which certain learning experiences become more likely to happen.

### Non-formal education

Nonformal education takes place outside formal learning environments like schools.

Settings, contents and methods are mostly planned but also flexible according to changing needs and group dynamics.

It focuses on creative, multimodal learning methods, that appeal to different types of learning and understanding. It is a deliberately chosen, voluntary mode of education that emphasizes on self – learning.

## Strategic planning in Youth work

Strategic planning has a focal role for a visible learning perspective and in designing activities in accordance with objectives that are relevant for young people. Although there are structural contingencies in youth work, strategic planning is possible and furthermore necessary for youth workers to fulfill their pedagogical tasks. It enables them to create youth work settings as learning environments in which certain learning experiences can become more likely to happen. It helps them also in shaping rather unpredictable everyday situations and to influence them actively. And last but not least strategic planning is an essential aspect of professional action in making one's own approaches and interventions transparent and communicable to colleagues and stakeholders.

### Professionalism

All planning is based on the professionalism of the youth worker. Professionalism means specific competences in the dimension of knowledge, skills and attitude. It works like a compass with which youth workers are able to confidentially take position and remain capable of action in challenging situations. It determines the perceptions and estimation of addressees, situations and interactions and it influences the choice of one's pedagogical interventions and actions. Basic competences in the context of activities to reduce racism and promote democracy include the following aspects:

**Human rights orientation and ethical awareness:** Human rights must be the basic reference in Youth Work when working with young people who show discriminating attitudes but also with those affected by discrimination and exclusion. Youth workers need to act in accordance with common working ethics and principles like being open and inclusive, opposing discrimination, acknowledging diversity, and take into account their target groups' interests.

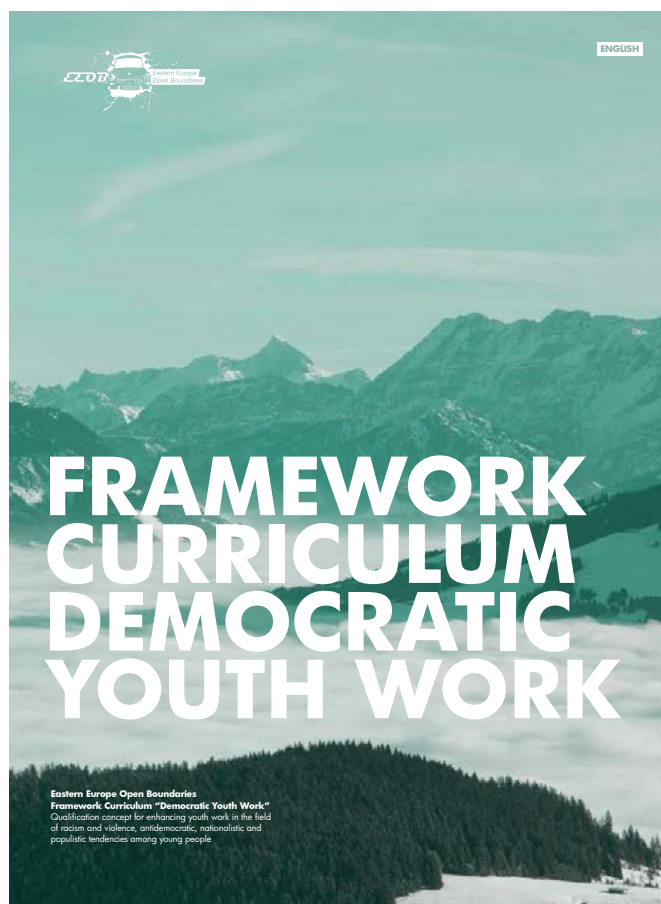
**Knowledge about discrimination and discriminative attitudes:** Individual discriminative attitudes are related to hegemonic discourses and representations that emerge from societal structures of dominance and discrimination. They are developed in individual experiences of socialisation, interactions and narratives which occur in the direct micro-systemic life world like the family or peer group. Youth work must contribute to the de-construction of generalizing rejections. The impact of discriminatory behaviour on those affected must be taken seriously and support and empowerment needs to be given.

**Gender awareness:** Gender discrimination in form of sexism and homophobia are part of problematic behaviours and attitudes in youth work settings, which needs to be addressed. Gender norms on the other hand work on behaviors, interests, interactions and perceptions. They can make it functional to adopt racist attitudes, like feeling obliged to act "manly" by opposing strangers and protect

white girls from them. Youth workers need knowledge on gender norms and their habitualization through socialization processes to work critically on them.

**Methodical action:** Youth workers need to be able to develop systematic strategies. These approaches must be grounded on scientific knowledge as well as on work experiences and field knowledge that allows practice transfer to the specific context. Furthermore youth workers must further develop specific pedagogical skills and competences like communicative skills or the ability for conflict regulation and moderation.

- 6 [https://www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/nak\\_eng.pdf](https://www.hm.ee/sites/default/files/nak_eng.pdf)
- 7 <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/1667851/Thinking+seriously+about+YW.pdf/6b620a71-f7be-cf80-7da9-17408a3960ba>



**Further reading** You will find more details on ground qualifications and competences in democratic youth work in the EEOB Curriculum, that has been developed in this strategic partnership, too. The curriculum can be used to design further trainings or for individual learning and competency enhancement:  
[uferlos.wixsite.com/eob](http://uferlos.wixsite.com/eob)

# Logic Models as Tools for Planning and Evaluation

---

The Logic Model is a tool that has been used for more than 20 years by professionals in programme planning. The model describes logical linkages among programme resources, activities, outputs, audiences, and short, intermediate or long-term outcomes related to a specific problem or situation. Once a programme has been described in terms of the logic model, critical measures of performance can be identified.

Here we propose youth workers to use the Logic Model when working on topics of democracy promotion and prevention of racism with young people. While it seems to be clear that the aim of this attempts is reducing racist attitudes and create more inclusive youth work settings professionals sometimes find it hard to decide where to start and how to implement effective pedagogical interventions. This is a practical chapter on methodological approaches for the realization of adequate and attractive processes of prevention and integration. Logic models can be meaningful tools for spatial planning when youth workers are dealing with discrimination in their work with young people and within the community. It allows the projects or activities evaluation in the end but also in all stages.

## **Systematic Approach**

Youth workers, as facilitators for the successful support of learning, personality development and integration processes, are competent professionals, who have a great expertise in responding to a multitude of issues young people bring into the youth work context.

On the institutional side, the insufficiency of available resources, particularly financial and material, which is always aggravated in times of economic stagnation and recession, implies a clear effort of optimization, effectiveness and efficiency. Adding the two components, personal and institutional, it seems clear that activities must be strategically implemented. Designing and following a set of implementation steps and respecting several essential principles can be a good point of professional reference and orientation in everyday working situations. At the same time these steps cannot be taken as fixed and stable. According to changing situations youth workers have to reflect continuously on the educational processes and if necessary adjust their initial plans.

## **Structure of Logic Models**

Regarding the process of building activities in a Logic Model, it is fundamental to think about the pre-activity/post-project (design), the activity/project (implementation) and the post-activity/post-project phases (evaluation and dissemination) in order to build an effective response to the intended objectives. Implementation takes up a special role here. It is indeed part of the process but as social situations are complex and not fully predictable the concrete shaping of this part is not only up to the professional interventions. What will actually happen can be influenced by good planning and can be reflected upon after it. As the Logic Model is according to professional action especially a tool for planning activities and for evaluating them in the end, we will focus on the pre- and post-activity phases in the following chapters.

The application of the logic model as a planning tool allows precise communication about the purposes of a project, the components and the sequence of activities and accomplishments. Further, activities originally designed with assessment in mind is much more likely to yield beneficial data, in case an evaluation is desired.

## Working Tool 1: The Logical Model

pre-activity-phase	activity-phase	post-activity-phase
<p><b>Analysis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• multi-perspective problem analysis</li> <li>• Estimations of resources</li> <li>• Identification of net-works</li> </ul>	<p><b>Conceptualization</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• objectives and goals</li> <li>• Elaboration of Indicators</li> <li>• Content and action steps</li> <li>• methods</li> <li>• schedule of activities and tasks</li> </ul>	<p><b>Implementation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Compliance with timing</li> <li>• Progress logs</li> <li>• Process monitoring</li> <li>• Moments of "on going collective reflection" (strengths, weaknesses, redirects, breaks ...)</li> </ul>
		<p><b>Evaluation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outputs</li> <li>• Outcomes</li> <li>• Impact</li> <li>• Necessary adjustments of strategy</li> <li>• dissemination</li> </ul>



**Further reading** You find more information on the logical model as a planning tool in the paper "Design and implement activities using Logic Model" that has been created in the Strategic partnership. [uferlos.wixsite.com/eeob](http://uferlos.wixsite.com/eeob)

# Step 1: Analysing the Situation

---

Every strategic planning starts with a thorough examination of the situation and the problems and challenges youth workers face in it. This situation analysis should not only concentrate on the young people as the most obvious target group but also take other relevant aspects and involved actors into consideration. In the first step a multi perspective situation analysis increases complexity and therefore gives way to diversify interpretation. This helps to prevent hasty judgements and enables correlations that provide suitable starting points for professional interventions. Analysing the initial situation can indicate additional options that might have been overlooked on the first sight.

## Choosing a Focus

Situation analysis is the base on which youth workers need to choose their focus for further action. Has the analysis shown, that the young people of my specific youth work setting themselves show racist attitudes and behaviours? Or do I see the challenge in community discourses and developments in the social environment? Is my target group in this environment at risk to manifest and increase racist and other discriminating attitudes as well? Or do they need safe spaces and empowering activities and services as they are immediately affected by these developments? The answers to these questions will have influence on further planning. It might determine my target group and therefore frame my options in setting goals, choosing contents and finding suitable methods. A multi-perspective situation analysis will often show more than one problematic constellation that can become a target of youth work intervention. Therefore it is essential that youth workers deliberately choose a focus to concentrate on.

## Resources

Youth work activities and services do not take place in a vacuum. To realize activities and projects as well as to shape existing spaces and settings in a way that they become stimulating environments for learning, development and change needs staff or volunteers who have expert knowledge on the topics. It needs time, money, space(s) and network-relationships that enable wider access to resources. According to what resources are available or can be realistically mobilized only specific problems might be effectively targeted while others cannot (yet). Furthermore this decision depends on structural conditions like institutional mandates and expectations from stakeholders, other relevant actors and members in the community. So situation analysis helps to rise awareness on the inherent challenges due to

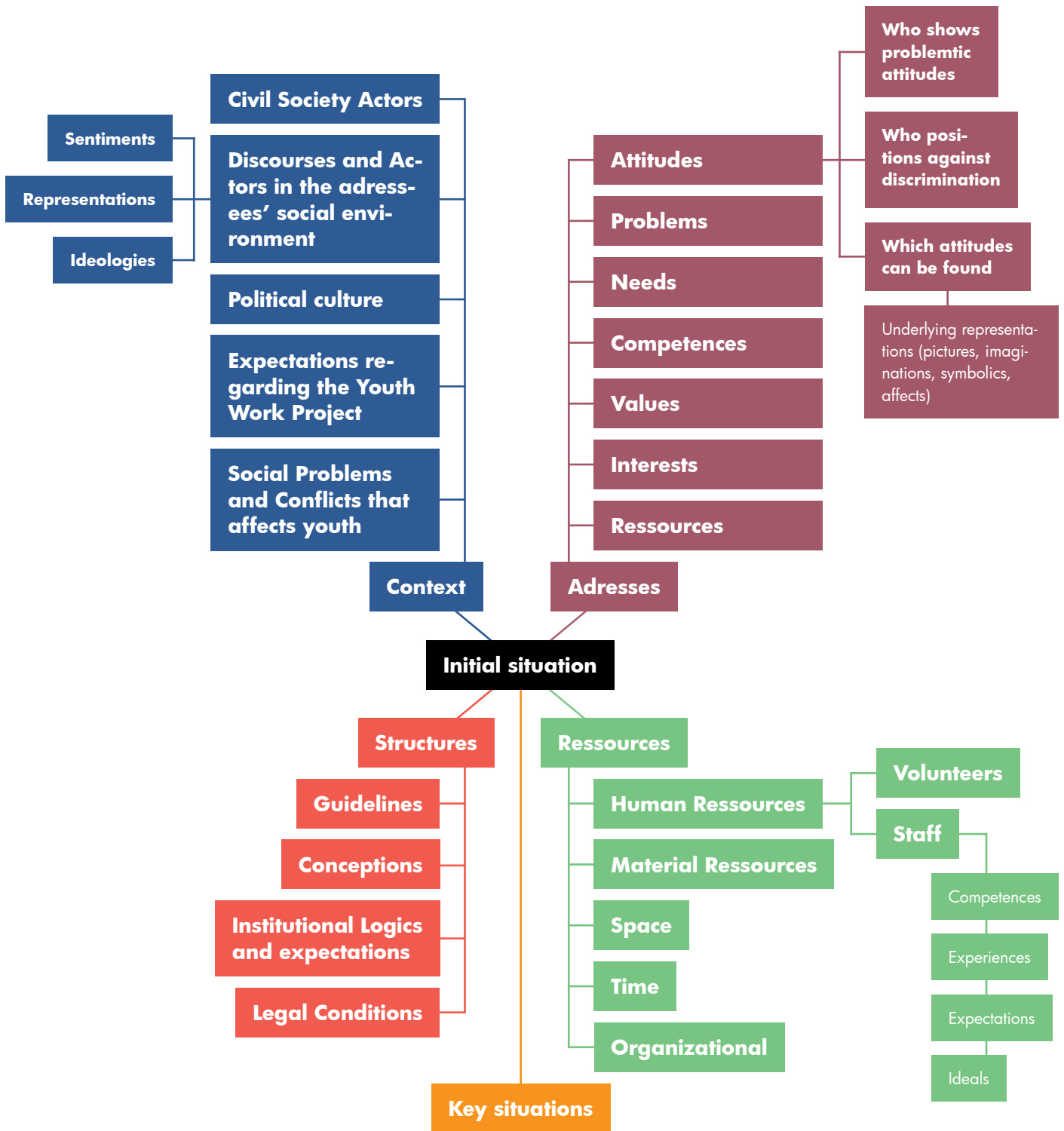
structural conditions or institutional resources and might in this respect also show starting points for more general interventions. These can be gaining more recognition in the community, building and expanding professional networks with other civil societal actors or developing and updating the organizational conception with all team members.

## Visualization

Visualization techniques help to see and keep the working results of planning. The easiest form would be to just write everything down on a piece of paper. Another helpful tool for an initial situation analysis can be a mind map. It is an easy way to brainstorm thoughts without worrying about order and structure. It allows to visually structure ideas and is freely expandable at any time. This makes it possible to add new aspects and ideas even in a later state of planning, when things have changed and you have to go back to situation analysis or you need to go deeper into detail of certain aspects.

The team should think together about relevant data and information for their situation analysis. For inspirations *Working Tool 2* with exemplary aspects to ask for can be used. For the group work in the team we recommend to collect all aspects on cards, which are easy to restructure.

## Working Tool 2: Mind Map for Situation Analysis<sup>8</sup>



<sup>8</sup> Derived from Lempp et al. (2017). Mit Rückgrat gegen Pakos! Eine Step by Step-Anleitung für die Jugendarbeit zur Gestaltung und Selbstevaluation von Angeboten gegen Pauschalisierende Ablehnungskonstruktionen. <http://www.bpb.de/shop/lernen/weitere/249751/mit-rueckgrat-gegen-pakos>

## Step 2: Setting Goals

### Creative ways to reflect on expectations, wishes and goals with young people:

- Non-conventional questions: “What if you won the lottery”, or “You have three wishes, what would you wish for?”
- Vision board: Creating a collage out of pictures that represent things the young people hope to improve, achieve or learn
- Three Stars and a Wish: Each youngster comes up with three “stars,” or things s/he is already doing well. Next, they have to come up with a “wish” – something that a youngster wants to work on. Reflecting on the stars and how they have been achieved helps reaching new goals

More on this topic in the paper on setting goals for activities that has been created in the strategic partnership: [uferlos.wixsite.com/eeob](http://uferlos.wixsite.com/eeob)

### Setting s.m.a.r.t. action goals:

**S**pecific  
**M**easurable  
**A**tttractive  
**R**ealistic  
**T**imely

Goal setting is one of the most crucial parts of any activity planning. Goal setting determines what you want to reach, propels you to move forward and gives you inspiration to achieve things. Goals are needed for getting a direction and focus. Writing down concrete goals and giving yourself a deadline to achieve them gives you a possibility to evaluate the work after reaching the goal or re-evaluate the process in case of failure.

### Negotiation

Professional goal setting in youth work depends essentially on the interests and expectations of the actors involved. This is especially true for the young people and the youth worker staff but also other actors in the social environment or institutional contexts shape the process of goal setting. Therefore consensus must be found and negotiated.

### Steps

Your situation analyses is the base for finding the several interests and expectations of the significant actors involved. The identified problems offer starting points for what needs to be changed or how the situation should be.

Young people should be involved actively in this process and have the chance to formulate their wishes. But especially when young people themselves show discriminating attitudes, there wishes and expectations might be far from what is professionally acceptable and in accordance with ethical work principles (e.g. “we don’t want to share the place with refugee youth”). Youth workers need to find out, what motivates these wishes and try to find more general desires behind that. Here creative, playful methods can help to get a hint (see box beside „Creative ways to reflect expectations, wishes and goals with young people”).

Consensual wishes can now be formulated as more general primary objectives, which describe the desired state to be achieved. These can be divided again into secondary objectives, which describe specific aspects regarding the primary objective. Eventually you can establish “smart” action goals, which operationalize your objectives and aim at those arrangements youth workers can actually create to reach them. (for S.M.A.R.T. criteria see the box beside)

The dissenting goals shall also be documented for a later recourse. They might be reflected on to find a professional justification of their rejection or might also change over the time.



### Working Tool 3: Negotiation of consenting objectives<sup>8</sup>

	Perspective A (e.g. Youth)	Perspective B (e.g. other actors involved)	Perspective of Youth Workers
<b>Estimation of Situation</b>  What is the Problem?			
<b>Reference to Social Inequalities</b>  Underlying social norms, requirements, positions, that make the behavior of actors subjectively functional (e.g. gender)			
<b>Change Perspective</b>  Who or what needs to be changed?			
<b>Objective/Desired Future</b>  How should the situation look like in the near future, so that we can say "It was worth it"?  How would it look like, if the Problem was solved?			
<b>Reference to Social Inequalities</b>			
	Perspective A (e.g. Youth)	Perspective B (e.g. other actors involved)	Perspective of Youth Workers
<b>Consenting Objectives</b>  Agreement of all actors involved		1.  2.  ...	1. 2. ...  1. 2. ...
<b>Dissenting Objectives</b>			

<sup>8</sup> Derived from von Spiegel (2011). Methodisches Handeln in der Sozialen Arbeit. München: Ernst Reinhardt Verlag

## Step 3: Defining a Framework

It depends on the setting as well as the motivations and interests of the target group what pedagogical actions are suitable. In an international youth exchange under a certain topic it might be more common and expected by the participants to realize group activities in formalized workshop settings or excursions. In open youth work contexts activities are often less formalized and many topics are processed in informal talks or during everyday activities (e.g. while playing table football). Nevertheless at many occasions it might be good to try something new or change perspectives. Formal methods and exercises can be implemented playfully in open settings as well as informal learning opportunities during free time can be fruitfully used in non-formal education projects.

### Relevant Content

There are topics youth workers want or have to seize according to their goals, their personal interests and knowledge or to institutional and professional mandates. Common topics in democratic youth work in this sense might be e.g. active (European) citizenship, migration, social justice, intolerance and discrimination, religion, identity or environment protection. The challenge is to link these topics with content that appeals to young people and that is relevant to them. Therefore it must not be too abstract and should connect to their lifeworlds and youth cultural references. This means to look for the “big” societal and political issues in everyday life like negotiating rules and responsibilities in the youth club together as part of democratic participation, volunteering as active citizenship or informal discussions on current incidents in the direct social environment. Methods and formats need to be close to the young people’s interests and be conceptualized basically experiential like e.g. using digital tools, offering creative activities, organizing sportive events or “hanging out” together. Again, here the youth workers creativity and awareness for the interests of their addressees are in demand.

### Choosing methods in formalized educational activities

Keeping the questions concerning content in mind it is now important to specify pedagogical interventions. In more formalized educative settings like workshops, trainings or fixed educational offers this first and foremost means to find and schedule suitable exercises or methods that help to mediate the content according to the defined goals. There are a lot of collections of methods and best practice

toolboxes out there that youth workers can easily get access to<sup>10</sup>. It is important to keep in mind that each of it was developed for a specific context. There might have been similar problems but different local conditions. Youth workers should be careful when they use those methods for their purpose. Working Tool 4 helps to reflect on potential and risks of activities with reference to the specific participants and reproduction of exclusion and discrimination.

### Action Steps for Informal Situations

If the context is more informal and activities cannot be scheduled the focus must be put on shaping key situations. These are situations that are happening regularly and are seen as important opportunities for youth workers to act and react in a pedagogical way (e.g. handling racist or sexist statements). Working tool 5 will assist youth workers in their systematic reflection on such situations and their attempts to find possible steps of future action. A mutual agreement on basic working principles and guidelines in the team are the essential base for professionalism in those situation. It ensures joint action in accordance with shared professional values and understandings. For getting an impression, if the situational pedagogic interventions have had any impact youth workers need to think of indicators (behaviors, utterances, procedures) that show positive change towards the previously determined objectives and action goals. Eventually it is possible to specify tangible action steps and working principles that shall guide the individual interventions and reactions in the future. These can only be related to the professionals’ actions as those are the only ones youth workers can actively influence. Actions of other actors are autonomous and can therefore not be part of planning.

<sup>10</sup> e.g. <https://www.salto-youth.net/tools/toolbox/>

### Further reading

You find more information on the mentioned topics, their significance and inspirations on how to address them with young people in the paper “What topics are attractive and educationally appropriate on political/civic education” that has been created in the Strategic partnership: [uferlos.wixsite.com/eeob](https://uferlos.wixsite.com/eeob)

## Working Tool 4: Method Planning<sup>11</sup>

<p><b>1) What am I aiming for with these methods, which processes do I want to initiate?</b></p>	
<p><b>2) Who is this method easy for?</b> (loud, quiet, quick-witted, language-related, physical ability, fine motor skills required, reading/ writing, teamwork, ... )</p>	
<p><b>3) Who is this method difficult for?</b> (see previous column)</p>	
<p><b>4) Does this method reproduce potentially present exclusions?</b> (relating to group dynamics)</p>	
<p><b>5) Does this method run the risk of reproducing social conditions of dominance*?</b></p>	
<p><b>6) Does this method run the risk of injuries/ insults/(re)-traumatizations?</b></p>	
<p><b>7) If yes for 4-6: How can I deal with this appropriately?</b> (Prevention, taking up for discussion, protect individuals, divide the group, seek help, don't use the method etc.)</p>	

<sup>11</sup> Derived from "Intersect Violence Toolbox" <https://igiv.dissens.de/the-toolbox/english.html>

## Working Tool 5: Developing Action Steps for Key Situations<sup>12</sup>

case level	goals, working principles and action guidelines	indicators for goal attainment	steps of action
<p><u>experienced key situation:</u></p>	<p><u>objectives:</u></p> <p><u>action goals:</u></p> <p><u>working principles and guidelines</u> (Which basic attitudes and quality standards are conducive to reach the goals? What guidelines can be derived from this?)</p>	<p>(how do we recognize that goals were reached?)</p>	<p>(Who should do what? When? And how?)</p>

<sup>12</sup> Derived from von Spiegel (2011). Methodisches Handeln in der Sozialen Arbeit. München: Ernst Reinhardt Verlag

## Step 4: Checking the Results

---

Youth workers are practitioners. The interaction with young people is what they are most concerned about and what motivates them. A subsequent evaluation is often perceived by many as annoying, time-consuming, redundant and sometimes even as a chicane from the outside. But only a structured evaluation and assessment enables professionals to answer the question if interventions and strategies have succeeded, seriously and transparent. Evaluations are learning opportunities in order to improve one's own work and thus effectively promote democratic coexistence of young people. Therefore, one should take the time for a systematic evaluation. Well-founded analysis and planning, as suggested in this handbook, makes evaluation even easier!

### For Whom?

*Funding and Policy* – Youth workers are obliged to evaluate their activities to funders and decision makers who want to make sure that money was handled responsibly and the corresponding measures had an effect of public interest. Often youth work is confronted with a general pressure of legitimacy, and even more from representatives of anti-democratic and populist positions. Youth workers therefore must be able to explain what they do to “outsiders”.

*Youth work community and scholars* – While many actors engage in democratic youth work, there are few systematic evaluations on the results that would help to prove its effects. For a practical profession, examples are needed that make good practice transparent and achievable in terms of its success. Only in this way approaches can be adapted to other contexts and successfully transferred. Shared and approved knowledge of effective approaches of dealing with racism and discrimination in youth work is the base for confident action of a profession.

*Professionals themselves and their own team* – Evaluation is worthwhile especially for youth workers themselves. They get an instrument for reflexion to make their own work more comprehensible to themselves and to others and they will be provided with indicators on what could be promising further attempts or where strategies need to be changed. Documented results can be used at a later date, when the memories and impressions of an activity are no longer fresh or for discussions with non-involved or new colleagues. An only vague feeling about whether activities and projects were successful or not is frustrating especially in pedagogic work on young peoples attitudes: Success depends not only on the quality of youth work but also on many external factors, on which youth work has only limited influence. Evaluation

helps to demarcate pedagogical action realistically. Also personal development and change is slow. Progress can be noticed not immediately but over a longer period of time. Good documented evaluation helps to see even the small steps on the way.

### The Question of Impact

Resistances of youth workers in the evaluation of their offers are also related to the fact that due to the specificity of the field of work mentioned at the beginning, a classical quantitative performance measurement is not possible and even useful. Democracy-promoting youth work addresses attitudes and beliefs of young people. Changes here are expressed in many ways, are not always clearly measurable, need time and take place individually to varying degrees. Moreover, due to the structural complexity of social processes, causalities cannot be directly investigated. Impacts can only be investigated indirectly on the basis of observation and well-founded hypotheses on correlations of interventions with the situational processes.

### What to evaluate?

*Outputs* – Outputs are concrete products and quantifiable results of an activity. These include materials such as videos, collages, artistic products, as well as statements from young people or the results of specific feedback surveys in the form of e.g. questionnaires. And finally, statements on the achievement of the target group and numbers of participants.

*Outcomes* – Outcomes are more difficult to identify and often more complex to measure. Outcomes are those effects that manifest themselves as deliberately intended changes or even consolidations directly in the addressees, in their attitudes and competences, as well as in their life contexts.

*Impacts* – The results achieved not in addressed individuals or groups, but in institutions, agencies, associations and other organizations are captured by the term “impact”. These are often radiation effects, which lead to offer implementations and are regarded as welcome side results if they are evaluated positively.

## Working Tool 6: Checklist for Evaluation

	Outputs	Outcomes	Impacts	Unintended Results
<b>Reflection</b>	Who has participated/number of participants? What has been created?	Which effects do we see in the young people?	Which effects do we see in us and in others?	Where there unintended results?
<b>Conclusions</b>	(Have we reached our goals? Did methods fit? What do others (in the community) say? Do we have to reconsider our attitude?)			

## Further readings

---

Professional Open Youth Work Declaration of Principles – Poywe:

[http://poywe.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Declaration-of-Principles\\_Professional-Open-Youth-Work.pdf](http://poywe.org/site/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Declaration-of-Principles_Professional-Open-Youth-Work.pdf)

Tools and Methods for Quality Development in professional open youth work Toolkit:

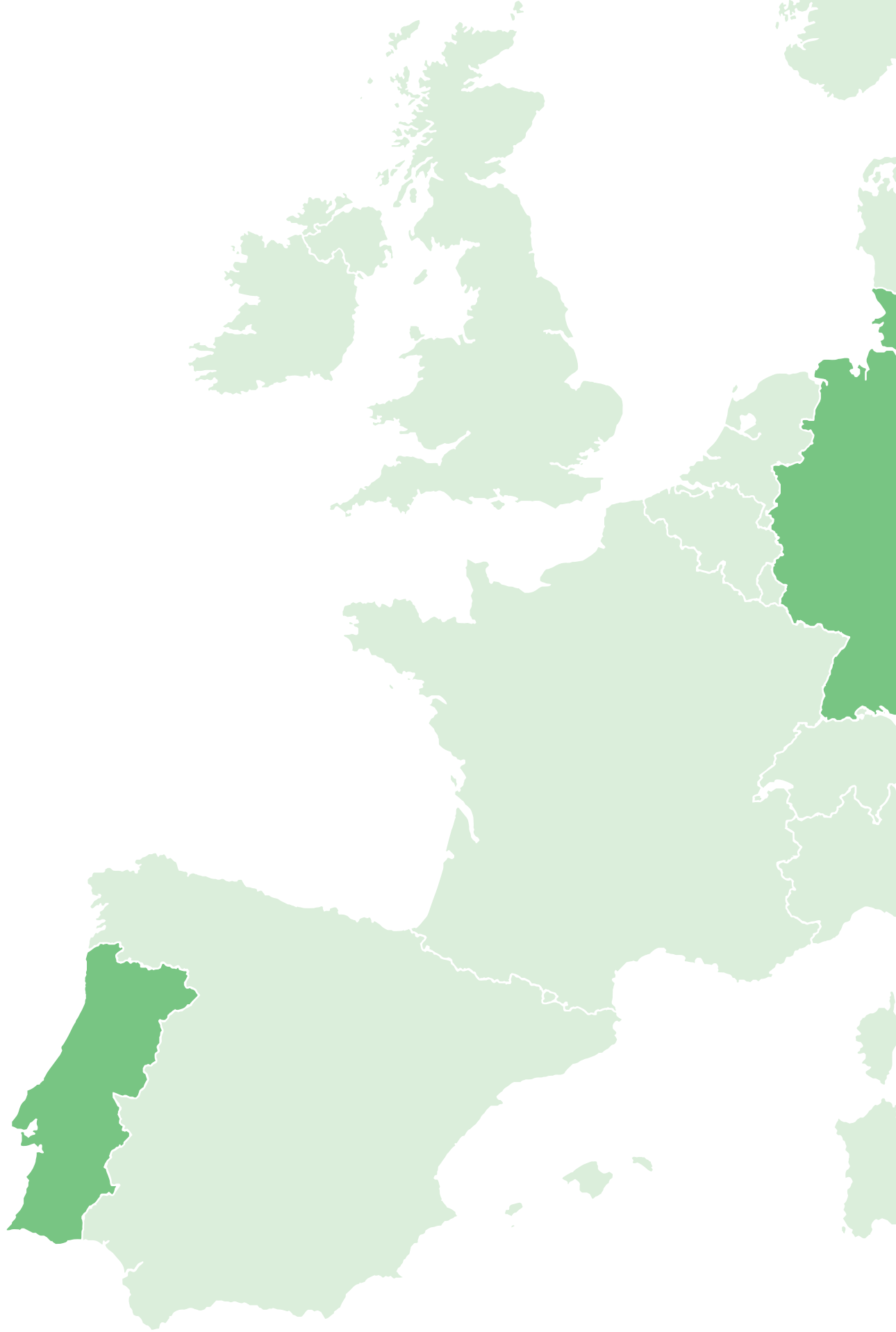
[http://www.boja.at/fileadmin/download/Projekte/Uploads\\_Qualitaet/3\\_Toolkit\\_2016\\_EN.pdf](http://www.boja.at/fileadmin/download/Projekte/Uploads_Qualitaet/3_Toolkit_2016_EN.pdf)

Quality Youth Work: A common framework for the further development of youth work:

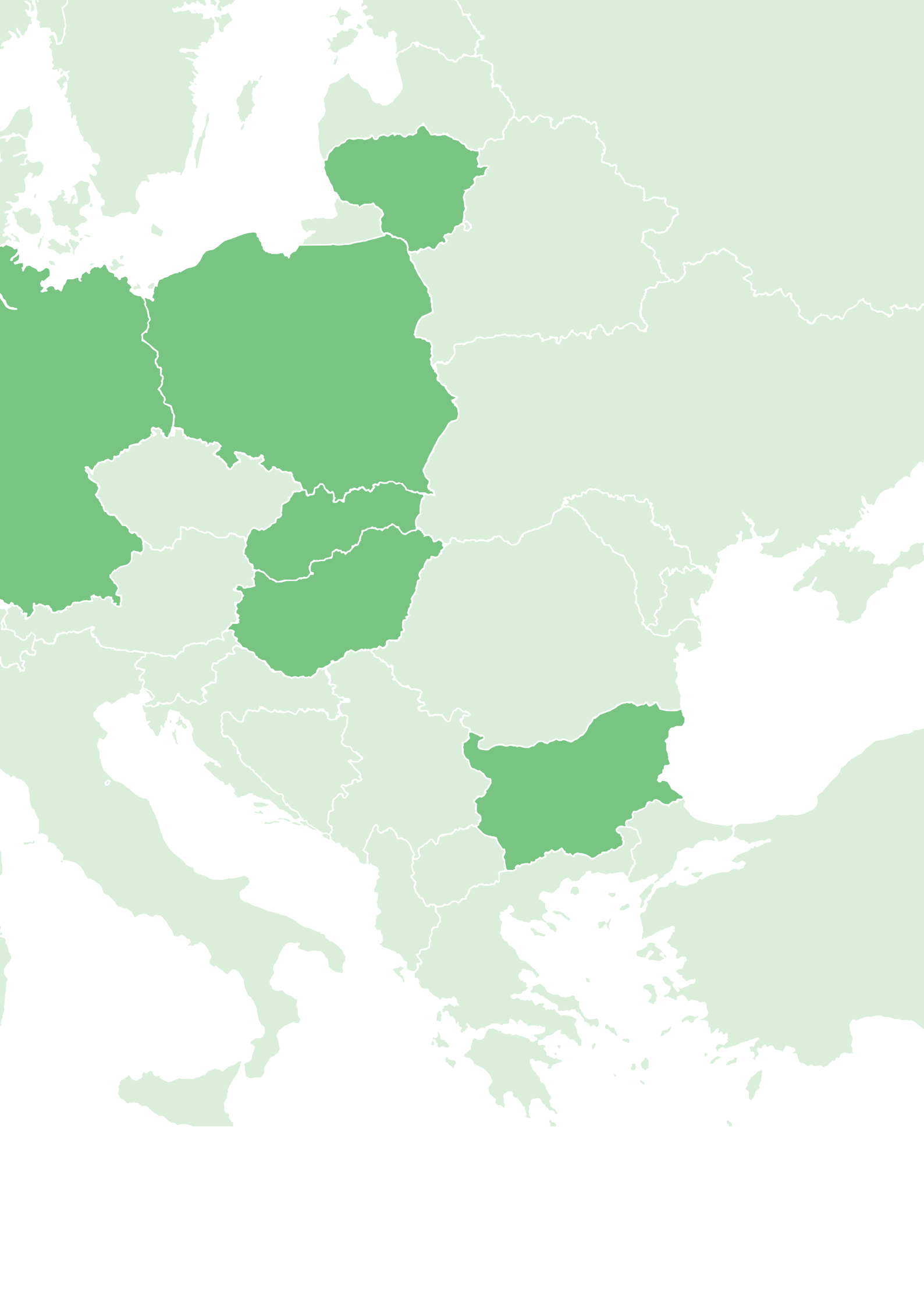
[http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/youth/library/reports/quality-youth-work\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/assets/eac/youth/library/reports/quality-youth-work_en.pdf)

Youth Monitoring Yearbook 2012, [www.noorteseire.ee/en](http://www.noorteseire.ee/en)

ThinkingseriousaboutYouthWork: <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/1017981/1667851/Thinking+seriously+about+YW.pdf/6b620a71-f7be-cf80-7da9-17408a3960ba>







ENFORCEMENT  
ING AWARE THAT

IS SO EASY  
TO GENERALISE

ABILITY TO NEW  
CRITICAL THINKING  
BACKGROUND  
KNOWLEDGE  
OF THE GOALS

The Strategic Partnership „**Eastern Europe Open Boundaries**“ has been coordinated and implemented by **AGJF Sachsen e. V.** in cooperation with the project „**MUT - Rassismusprävention. Demokratiebildung in Jugendarbeit und angrenzenden Arbeitsfeldern**“ and the project „**Uferlos - Kampagne zur Aktivierung der Internationalen Jugendarbeit in Sachsen**“.



Gefördert im Rahmen des Landesprogramms 'Weltoffenes Sachsen für Demokratie und Toleranz'



Diese Maßnahme wird mitfinanziert durch Steuermittel auf der Grundlage des von den Abgeordneten des Sächsischen Landtags beschlossenen Haushaltes.



This project is financed by the European Commission through the Erasmus plus Program. This publication reflects the view only of the author, and the European Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein. Reproduction is authorised provided the source is acknowledged.

