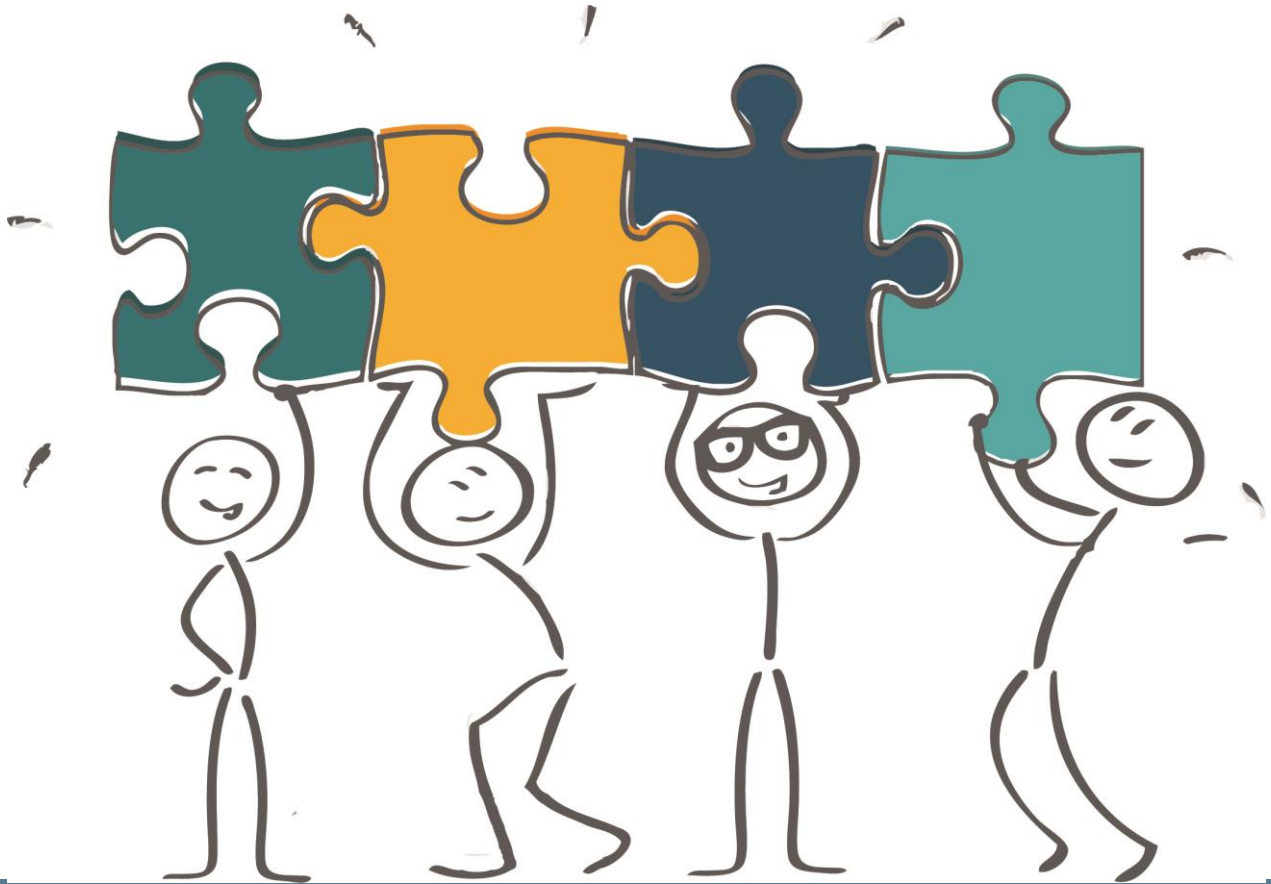


European
Commission



Improving Youth Work

*Your guide to quality
development*

Executive summary

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Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture
Directorate B - Youth, Education and Erasmus+
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Youth work quality systems and frameworks in the European Union

*Handbook for implementation
Executive summary*

Written by



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Executive summary

Improving Youth Work - Your guide to quality development provides a detailed, step-by-step guide on how to build a system for, and work with, quality development. It does this in an easily accessible manner, with many examples, and in clear language that is free of technical terms. It can therefore be read by all of the different stakeholders who need to be involved in the process of quality development, from young people and youth workers to people working in public administration and politicians. It also gives concrete advice on how these stakeholders should interact in order to produce the best and most constructive process possible.

It builds on the report *Quality Youth Work – A common framework for the further development of youth work* produced by the Expert Group on Youth Work Quality Systems in the EU Member States, published in April 2015. In this report the Expert Group gives a working definition of youth work and states the core principles that must guide youth work if it is to be successful. Taken together, this establishes a common ground and framework for quality development and for this handbook. It enables users with different backgrounds to start from where they are and develop youth work in accordance with their own needs and conditions.

The process of building and running a system for quality development described in this handbook is applicable to all different forms of youth work, from open youth work in youth centres to mobility projects and the financing of youth organisations. It can be used regardless of the setting and conditions under which youth work takes place. It is useful regardless of the type of organisation that provides youth work and by whom it is carried out, be they paid youth workers or volunteers. In this way it fully respects the diversity of youth work.

After an introduction in which the reader is shown how it is structured and how it can be used, *Improving Youth Work – Your guide to quality development* is divided into four main chapters and an appendix.

In Chapter 1 'Preparing a process of quality development', the reader learns how to run an efficient and inclusive process which takes into account the needs and interests of all the different stakeholders.

Chapter 2 'Establishing common ground for quality development' lays the foundation for sustainable development of youth work through discussing and defining all the central terms and concepts, such as 'quality', 'indicators' and 'the core principles of youth work'.

Chapter 3 'Developing indicators and tools to gather information' has a learning-by-doing approach, which the reader can use to formulate their own indicators as a basis for quality development.

Running parallel to the development of indicators, the reader is guided on how to identify the degree to which the indicators are met. What different methods could be used to do a follow-up on, for example, youth participation, non-formal learning and the inclusion of marginalised groups of young people?

In the last section, the reader learns how to find or develop the concrete tools needed in order to put these methods into practice. The chapter is supported with a lot of practical examples and discussion questions.

Chapter 4 'Working with continuous quality development' gives step-by-step guidance on how to run a system for quality development. The reader learns how to manage the information gathered through different tools, and how to use this information to decide on measures for development and the setting of objectives.

Having come this far, the reader will have a system for on-going and structured quality development and know how to operate it. The only thing left, which is covered in the next section, is to implement it. Here the dos and don'ts of implementation are discussed and advice is given on how to turn the implementation process into a means for positive organisational development.

In the final section 'Evaluating a quality system', the reader can discuss and evaluate the outcome of their process and, hopefully, feel that it has been a good and rewarding one.

The appendix consists of a glossary, definitions and explanations and a lot of reference material, mostly through websites. It also contains some examples of existing tools used for quality development. This list of examples is by no means exhaustive; it is only there to illustrate what different tools might look like and to function as inspiration.

The main messages in this handbook are:

- The backbone of quality development is a clear and structured process that uses well-customised tools, but the heart and soul of it is constructive reflection and thorough analysis based on reliable information.
- Reflection and analysis, whether it takes place during the creation or running of a system for quality development, needs the views and engagement of all stakeholders concerned.
- Quality development should be a continuous process. Having a good atmosphere and fun while you work is therefore essential.

Hopefully, this handbook can function as an inspiring and steady partner on that long and winding road!

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