

STRENGTHENING YOUTH WORK ACROSS EUROPE.

growing youth work

CALL FOR WEBINAR / 22.09.2026.

YOUTH WORK TALKS: INSTRUMENTALISATION

22 September 2026 | 11:00-12:30 CET | online

What happens when other sectors use youth work methods, spaces, and relationships to pursue their own objectives? When does cross-sectoral cooperation strengthen youth work, and when does it begin to change its identity and purpose? Is instrumentalisation always a threat - or can it also be an invitation to cooperate?

These are some of the key questions we will explore in the last webinar of Youth Work Talks in 2026, a three-part webinar series organised within the Growing Youth Work project.

About the webinar

Youth work has always operated at the intersection of different sectors. It fills gaps, builds bridges, and develops relationships with young people whom other systems may struggle to reach. At the same time, this proximity carries a risk: youth work's methods, spaces, and relationships may gradually be used to pursue objectives it did not choose, such as managing social unrest, reducing unemployment figures, or compensating for shortcomings in formal education.

However, cross-sectoral cooperation has also produced some of youth work's most innovative and meaningful practices. The **question is therefore not whether youth work should cooperate with other sectors, but how it can preserve its core principles, identity, and independence while doing so.**

The webinar will reflect on questions such as:

- When does cooperation with other sectors strengthen youth work - and when does it begin to change it?
- How can youth workers recognise and respond to instrumentalisation in their own practice?
- What structural, financial, and relational conditions help youth work maintain its identity and independence when working across sectors?
- Is there a point at which youth work should say no - and how does it know when that point has been reached?

What can you expect?

This 90-minute webinar is designed to be dynamic and participatory. It will combine panel discussion, audience interaction and small-group exchange. The webinar will begin with a discussion statement, followed by a live speed-positioning exercise where participants can immediately share their stance. A panel of speakers from local, national, and European levels will then debate the issue from different perspectives, each bringing a dilemma for the audience to reflect on. The session will also include breakout groups, a shared harvest, and final key messages. You can also expect a short contextual input: a brief framing of the historical and theoretical debate around instrumentalisation in youth work.

The aim is not necessarily to reach consensus, but to name tensions openly, stimulate open dialogue, and explore possible steps forward for the field. If you work directly in youth work or in a related sector, this webinar will offer a valuable opportunity to engage with different perspectives and contribute to an important European conversation.

Why and how to join?

By joining this webinar, you will have the chance to:

- gain insight in the topic of instrumentalisation and how it appears in youth work practice;
- explore both the opportunities and risks of cooperation between youth work and other sectors;
- exchange views with experts and peers from across Europe;
- contribute to identifying tensions, strategies, and possible next steps;
- help generate key messages for future cross-sectoral cooperation involving youth work.

This webinar is part of Growing Youth Work's contribution to the follow-up of the 4th European Youth Work Convention and the implementation of the European Youth Work Agenda (EYWA). As debates continue around quality, sustainability, and the role of youth work in society, the question of cooperation and instrumentalisation is crucial.

We warmly invite you to take part in this conversation and help shape the discussion on cooperation, independence, and the future of youth work in Europe! Please **register by 20 September 2026** by using [**THIS LINK**](#).

See you online!