



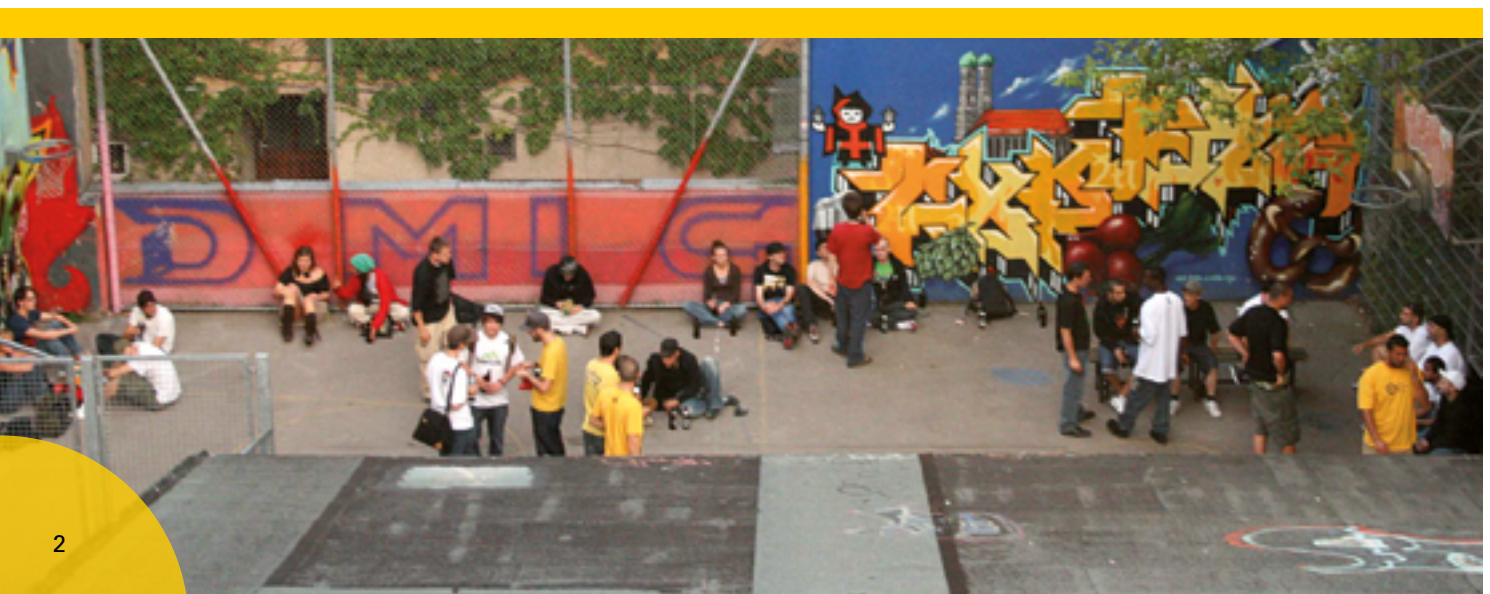
# Framework Concept for **Youth Work** in Munich



Short Version

## Preliminary note

Adolescents as a whole and in their great diversity have disappeared almost entirely from politics and public awareness. In the media they are often presented simply as the causers of violence or as commercially exploitable wearers of fashion. It is a slightly different case with children; tolerance as far as they are concerned has increased. What is required again is a mobilizing policy which recognizes young people as the future potential for our society and which specifically addresses the needs and requirements of this generation and implements appropriate measures. Youth work in Munich will continue to focus more directly on this target group and to get involved in political discussion. It provides professionally-run services within the framework of public social services in the City of Munich. It requires a well-functioning infrastructure and sufficient funding. Particularly in a time when individual biographies and the education of young people have changed, such a service is indispensable to the city.





## Self-definition

Youth work in Munich has its own profile with a clear commitment to education. The aim of all its work is to build personal, social and cultural skills and thereby to improve the ability of children and young people to make decisions and take responsibility. By actively taking part in shaping their community and surroundings, they discover that what they do has an effect and, at best, contributes to strengthening democratic structures.

To this purpose the youth work services expressly encourage the involvement of children and young people in all relevant issues and processes in the municipality, accepting and encouraging the diversity of individual young people. To do this, real, social and virtual spaces are set up in which young people can experiment and learn through experience in a social context.

Thus the services offered act as an aid to orientation, transmitting values in a complex urban society. Cultural means of expression are accorded particular significance in this context. In addition the youth work services regard themselves as a safe haven. A prevention network involving various different professional youth workers supports girls and boys in developing a stable sense of self-confidence. These services also address families.

Youth work is an integral part of the municipal network of social services and is linked into the municipal education landscape. In order to ensure that youth work is successful, it requires personnel, financial resources and premises which meet its needs.

## Development of the framework concept

In Spring 2009 the Child, Youth and Family Service in Munich, in close co-operation with independent organisations working in the field of youth work, initiated the drawing up of a conceptual framework in the organisations involved. The framework can be best characterized as a workshop document and has been conceived as a 'loose-leaf' compilation, which can be added to as required, reflecting the need for a flexible professional framework within which the educational practice in the organisations can be oriented. As a field of work which is consistently subject-oriented, youth work makes the needs of its target groups the determining factor.



## Facts and figures

Around 307,000 children, teenagers and young adults between 6-26 years old live in Munich; the main target group of 6-17 year olds comprises c. 120,000 young people. The mid-term prognosis is for an increase in children and young people of 4-10%. The proportion of children and young people with a migrational background amongst 6-17 year olds is over 50%. In the field of youth work, the Child, Youth and Family Service, as the public authority, and 60 independent organisations operate in this area. The Child, Youth and Family Service itself does not run any centres or facilities. The role of the public authority is to take overall responsibility in the area of youth work, as well as to communicate and implement municipal requirements and guidelines; the services offered by the youth work organisations is based on a specification which has been agreed by both parties, is reviewed every three years and, if necessary, amended.

On average, there were the equivalent of 2.9 full-time qualified youth worker posts per neighbourhood organisation and the equivalent of 1.88 full-time qualified youth worker posts per organisation offering city-wide services in 2009. There was a total of 455 qualified youth workers in the child and youth work centres and facilities.

## Positioning

In its policy document *Leitlinien der PERSPEKTIVE München*, the City Council has laid down city-wide guidelines for its most important strategic spheres of activity. For youth work the resource allocation is determined by the Child and Youth Work Committee. The aim is, with sufficient local government funding, to ensure ongoing services in youth work organisations. This *Framework Concept for Youth Work* is as such a concept for youth work planning.

Through its services, youth work reaches primarily children and young people who are socially disadvantaged and those who are sometimes threatened with social exclusion, i.e. rejection by the community. Youth work has the responsibility to counteract such discrimination and to provide a stimulating leisure space and meeting place for **all** young people. In addition it has the equally important task of providing orientation and help in coping with life's challenges.

## Assumptions

Bearing in mind the basic concept for the youth work field outlined above and the circumstances of the children, teenagers and young adults concerned, it is necessary to translate these prerequisites into education services.

## Target groups for youth work

Youth work services in Munich address **all** children, teenagers and young adults between 6-27 years old (girls/young women and boys/young men with or without a migrational background, as well as disadvantaged groups). The target group is highly heterogeneous.



## Child development support

Children have many skills and abilities. They wish to learn about the world, to come to terms with it. To do this they need encouragement and supervision as well as a supportive, stimulating environment in their families, at school and in their immediate community, including the neighbourhood youth work centres and facilities which are visited by the children. Centres for children offer low-threshold, open-access activities.

## Youth development support

During adolescence major physical, emotional and social changes take place. Adolescents have to make decisions about conflicting potential paths in life. The main issues for them are to set career goals and to develop an ethical system.

## Communicating values

Young people need to orientate themselves between the so-called 'anything goes' approach to life and socially prescribed norms and values. In this phase established experience and values come under examination. In order to be able to communicate values to adolescents, one needs 'suitable opportunities', the 'right moment' and the 'right place'. Youth work provides space, encouragement and personal support to enable adolescents to successfully develop a set of values, social competence and autonomy.

## Building relationships

The ability to cope with the problems of everyday life presupposes not only material and socio-spatial resources but also social resources. Given the developmental tasks faced by young people, they are dependent on 'people of trust' with whose help they can develop ways of dealing with various different situations and problem-solving strategies. The youth workers themselves are an important 'medium' in building relationships. They communicate a sense of security in that they are reliable and always there.

## Holiday programmes

The school holidays are a time for recuperation, relaxation and an opportunity for young people to decide how to use their time. They offer space for play and new experiences, shared activities, as well as adventure, excitement and challenge. These are important elements in the diverse activities offered by youth work and they also take the form of non-formal learning activities.





## Stages in development

The change in the world of children, teenagers and young adults today can best be described as life in a multi-option society. In addition there is a general scientifically-recognised lengthening of the adolescent phase.

## Childhood

Urban areas are becoming increasingly an adult world in which only 'islands' remain for children. Even within the family, being a child has changed. Today the upbringing of children is predominantly based on partnership, treating children as equals; at the same time, only children are becoming more common. This leads to children and young people mainly coming together with other children in day-care facilities, such as crèches or kindergartens, at school or in youth centres or youth clubs.

## Adolescence as an important phase

Today adolescence means above all a time to develop a stable feeling of self-confidence and social skills. At the same time educational and career goals are developed which will provide the basis for the future. Youth work's socio-spatial and opportunity structure is a resource which adolescents can use to cope with these challenges. Adolescence also means developing autonomy. Taking responsibility for one's own lifestyle becomes a central issue to be dealt with by young people. They need to develop a stable ego-identity while at the same time retaining flexibility and adaptability specific to various different situations and roles in life.

## Youth work as an independent education area

The legal framework, as well as daily practice, show varied approaches to and various different options for education. Youth work offers activities, based on its structural possibilities, that give young people the opportunity to get to know themselves, to 'work' together with others to achieve this goal and to create and shape something together with others. Its understanding of education follows the principles of openness, voluntariness and participation.

## Skills training

The educational activities provided by youth work are not aimed primarily at imparting knowledge but enabling the participants to learn skills, particularly personal life skills, such as the ability to work in a team, self-organisation and goal-oriented activity.



## Local education landscapes

A local education landscape is defined as being the mandate to offer specific varied, co-operative educational opportunities, both formal (e.g. schools) and informal (youth work, same-age groups) at a local level. In this education landscape youth work plays a part offering a full-day schooling concept.

## Co-operation between youth work and schools

Youth work is subject-oriented and is a form of education addressing the need to help young people to develop their own personality and skills to deal with their specific challenges in life. To meet these requirements a wide range of services has been developed. In the context of these educational responsibilities and aims, youth work links up with schools and other youth welfare services.

## Transitional phases

With regard to the transitional phases in the lives of young people, the development of local educational landscapes and the associated co-operation with youth welfare services, schools, career-training facilities and other educational institutions are of great importance. Youth work can make a significant contribution here as the transition from school into working life is one of its central fields of activity.

## Experiencing culture and creativity

Children and young people wish to experience themselves in individual creative processes. These offer them the opportunity to present their work, receive recognition and to be noticed in public. Crucial to cultural education is that it does not take place within curricula and functionalized standards but that it is designed as a process of self-discovery and self-education. Since 2009 Munich has an overall Concept for Cultural Education which originated from the close co-operation between three local government departments (social issues, schools and culture) and various organisations participating in cultural education. The concept was adopted unanimously by the City Council.





## Participation in cultural life

Children and young people, with their individually different cultural competence and resources, are members of the collective culture of the city. It is necessary to take account of these differences in cultural education. Youth work makes it possible for young people to participate in cultural activities; it provides premises and resources for this participation.

## Media education as a reality of life

The media are an inherent part of children's and young people's lives. They have an effect on the reality of their lives and ultimately influence their moral and ethical development. In the media young people seek to find relaxation and solutions to problems. Developments, such as Web 2.0, make it easier to make and maintain social contact but, on the other hand, it forces adolescents to reflect often on their usage of the internet.

## Media in the hands of children and young people

To orientate oneself in the 'flood of data' and not just to consume but also to take part actively is a task for which children and young people often teach themselves the necessary technical skills. Their way of approaching the internet is often reckless and reflects a new culture in the process of growing up. However, the media also serve young people as access to increased political involvement. In order to provide young people with positive support, competent parents and responsible educators are required who can critically question the digital lifestyle of the younger generation. To this end, youth work provides media skills training.

## Media security

The medialization of all aspects of life brings with it not only opportunities but also risks. Data protection was always a sensitive issue but increasingly questions are being posed regarding copyright and the violation of personal rights in the world of the media. Youth work needs to address this problem, in particular with ongoing up-date training of their youth workers.

## Political education

With its emphasis on participation, youth work puts into practice the right of children and young people to take part in events. The organisations therefore provide an authentic arena in which to learn about democracy. Here children and young people operate in an area of conflict between basic set rules and scope for open decision-making. They experience how decisions are reached and how they can participate in the decision-making process. The scope for decision-making and putting decisions into action is far from being fully exploited. In the future educators in this field will need to take on more the role of counsellor or tutor.





## Help in coping with everyday life

Apart from their significance as places for education and self-development, youth work organisations can also be seen as a resource to help children and adolescents to cope with everyday life. A prerequisite for such work is a focus on the skills and strengths of young people and not on their deficits. Young people need an opportunity structure in which they can develop and orientate themselves.

## Socio-spacial infrastructure

Youth work is a part of the social infrastructure of a city district. Neighbourhood orientation means taking account of the personal circumstances of children and young people, and representing their interests in the local community. Youth work has the responsibility to provide and secure public spaces for children and young people. It can be assumed that children and young people who live in a culturally diverse city like Munich will also have different needs when it comes to space and room use. In multi-purpose premises, it must be ensured that young people have an area which they can call their own and organise as they wish.

## Structural and educational welfare of young people

Youth work services form part of structural and educational child and youth welfare. Unlike the legal provisions, here it is not a matter of avoidance or prohibition but of competent handling of issues – of 'life skills'.

## Gender equality and protection against sexual violence

A part of gender-aware youth work, which has the aim of gender equality, has to be an examination of social gender roles. Physical integrity, respect for the individual and sexual self-determination are regarded as universal human rights for children and young people. It is necessary to address subjects such as intimacy, violation of borders, control and protection in order to demand gender equality for girls and boys and to set an example. In this area too, it is an essential responsibility of youth work to educate young people so that they can look after themselves.

## Prevention and dealing with addiction

Youth work is an important element in the prevention of addiction. The aim here is to strengthen the personality of young people as a potentially effective way of combating the risk of addiction. In youth work, children and adolescents have scope to express themselves in ways that are appropriate for their age, while at the same time experiencing necessary rules and receiving support. Activities such as a healthy lifestyle, experiencing nature, sport, body work, as well as enjoyable ways of making merry without alcohol can be fruitful alternative events.



## Becoming a competent consumer

Youth work takes account of the fact that young people have varying degrees of skill and knowledge with regard to consumption. It is clear that young people know how to use this knowledge self-confidently but that they are at the same time also not aware of the risks and consequences. It is the responsibility of youth work to guide children and adolescents on the path to becoming critical consumers – always under the premise that they are the subject of their own behaviour.

## Youth workers as a resource

The staff are the most important requirement for the quality and success of youth work. It is all the more regrettable that special college or university courses for youth work are few and far between. The sector therefore has to rely on special strategies for personnel recruitment and training; the skills and professional expertise required must be acquired through on-the-job experience and further training.

## Qualification requirements for youth work

Employment in youth work assumes not only theoretically sound but also in-depth applied knowledge. As a rule, a German university diploma or a Bachelor of Arts degree in social work is required. In addition to this basic requirement, in specific areas of youth work an additional qualification is of great value.

## A complex job requirement profile

The job requirement profile ranges from personal skills to methodological competence. In addition there are organisational and administrative skills, qualifications in various different fields of concern to young people, as well as technical and instrumental skills, and knowledge of the community in the specific city neighbourhood concerned.

## Many-faceted roles

The educational staff in youth work are a role model for the young people who visit its centres and facilities. The work requires staff to be prepared for and aware of this role and to be gender-sensitive. Working with children and adolescents demands friendliness, a readiness to help others, humour and creativity. These characteristics emphasize the fact that the staff of the centres and facilities have an important integration function. A well-balanced team, as regards gender, age and ethnic/national origin, is desirable.



## Adequate staffing

In order to be able to respond adequately on an educational level to unexpected events, it is essential that youth work services have access to sufficient personnel resources. For example, work required to deal with conflicts is something which cannot be planned, neither the point in time nor the amount of time required to work out a solution.

## Funding requirements

The Child and Youth Services Act (KJHG) is laid out in the German Social Code (SGB VIII, Paragraph 11) as follows: "Young people shall be provided with the necessary services to foster their development." This is the responsibility of local authorities and independent organisations in the area concerned. The proportion of funding spent on youth work should be at least 15% of the local authority budget for social services for children and young people. The City of Munich does fulfil its obligation with regard to funding but this needs to be checked regularly as the social and living situations of young people are changing continually.

## Requirements of premises

A most important resource are the premises used for youth work; out of 134 youth work organisations and projects in Munich, 81 of them are housed in municipal premises and 11 are in rented buildings. The organisations and projects are located both in individual neighbourhood areas as well as extending their work outside of the immediate community. The arrangement of the rooms and space should be manageable, create a feeling of intimacy and cosiness and also take into consideration the requirements and activities of various different users. The premises are required to meet the standards for handicapped user access and to be laid out and furnished flexibly to allow future alteration. Two further requirements are easy access by public transport and a well-illuminated approach to the premises.

## Requirement statements in new housing development areas

According to projections made by the City of Munich's Department of Urban Planning and Building Regulations, the population is expected to rise by around 67,000 inhabitants by 2020. In view of this, extensive plans are being drawn up for new housing estates within the urban area as a whole. In these new housing development areas it is expected that there will be an increased number of children and young people. At the moment, 15 centres and facilities are being planned for new housing development areas.





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