

# Learning to become a youth worker in different architectures of youth work

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# Starting points

- In the process of learning **any individual youth worker will become a member of a larger community of youth work**, and while doing so he or she absorbs the knowledge, ethos, concepts and methodologies held dear by this community.
- From learning as acquisition to **learning as participation**
- The importance of **communities of practice**
- For an individual, learning means engaging and contributing to practices; for communities it is about refining the practice and making sure that new generations of practitioners will emerge; for organisations learning is about sustaining an interconnected community through which an organisation knows what it knows and thus becomes effective as an organisation (Wenger 2008, 6-7).

# Diversity and even complexity of youth work

- The Declaration of First Convention on Youth work emphasised that while the diversity of youth work clearly is a fact, there are common characteristics of youth work. First, youth work provides space for association, activity, dialogue and action. And second, it provides support, opportunity and experience for young people when they are transitioning from childhood to adulthood.
- Second European Youth Work Convention in Brussels in 2015, the goal was to find common ground where all youth work stands. Approaching the question along the same lines as the first Declaration, youth youth work was seen as creating spaces for young people and providing bridges in their lives.

# Practice architectures perspective

- Learning to be a competent youth worker in this conception is not a solitary affair. Instead it is a shared, communal, in essence an intersubjective thing.
- Practice is seen as historically formed and structured: it is influenced by local histories. Practice is socially structured as well, as it is influenced by social relations and interactions.
- Although there is an emphasis of a social background in this theory, in the end the question is about “what particular people do, in a particular place and time”; social practice “contributes to the formation of their identities as people of a particular kind, and their agency and sense of agency” (Kemmis, 2009, 23).
- By analysing how different practices are structured, one is able to pinpoint what learning paths are available for a given individual in a local setting.

*The theory of  
practice architectures  
(Kemmis & Grootenboer 2008)*

- study of prerequisites of social practices in terms of
  - the material-economic preconditions (*'doings'*)
  - the cultural-discursive preconditions (*'sayings'*)
  - the social-political preconditions (*'relatings'*)

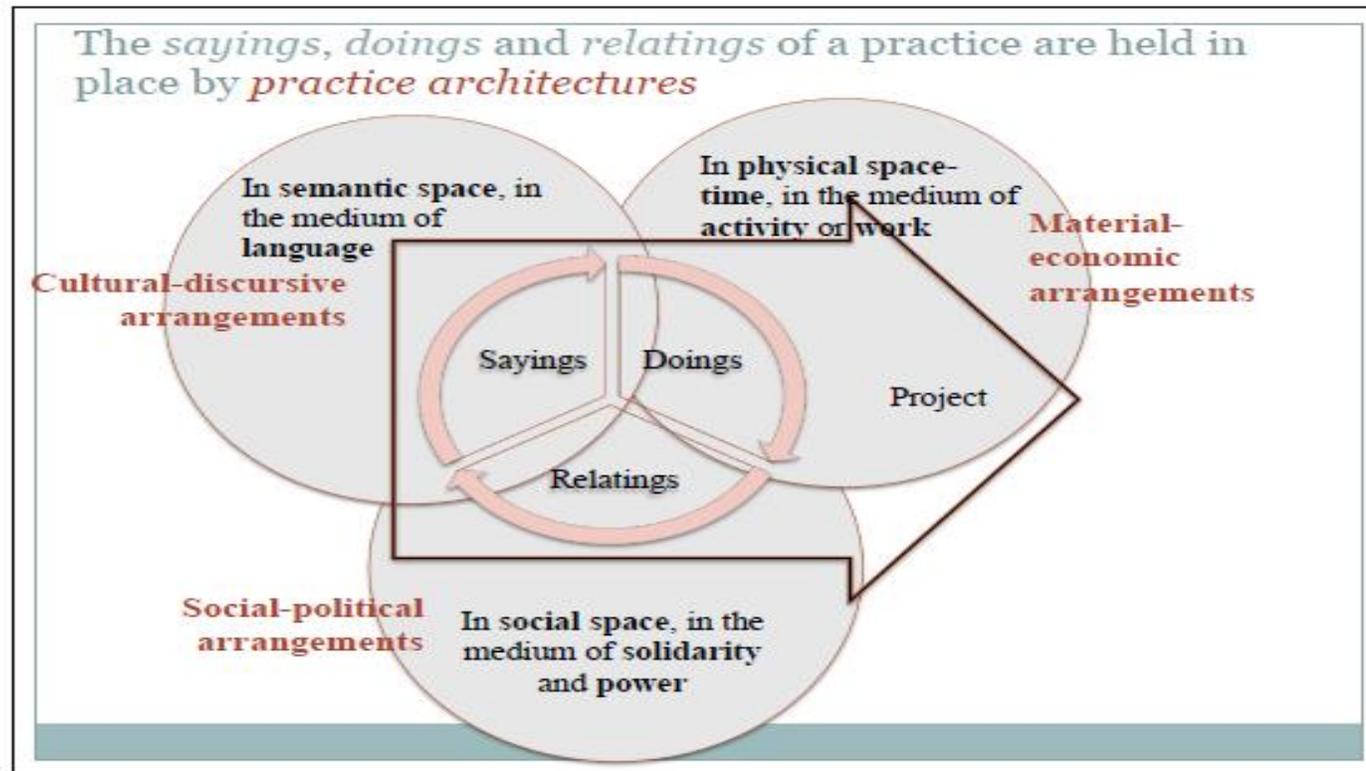
# The comparative perspective on youth work practice architectures

- **Sayings**/cultural-discursive dimension: how youth work is recognised, formulated, talked about and debated.
- **Doings**/structural-occupational dimension: how youth work education is supported and how youth work can be a sustainable career.
- **Relatings**/social-political dimension: how youth work is recognised, supported and organised so that it can relate to young people, general public and other professional cultures.

# Mapping the Educational Paths of Youth Workers Study: how the data was grouped

- Sayings = Legislation, Competency framework, Quality Assurance
- Doings = Vocational Education, Higher (Tertiary) Education, National support for Non-Formal Learning, Sustainable and Identifiable Career Paths
- Relatings = Associations of Youth Work

# The way Kemmis himself visualises his theory



# Youth Partnership

Partnership between the European Commission and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth



## Group 1. Strong practice architectures

Belarus
Belgium (French)
Estonia
Finland
France
Germany
Ireland
Luxembourg
Slovakia
UK (England)
UK (Wales)

1. Legislative definitions
2. Competency description and/or
3. Quality assurance

Associations of youth workers

1. Vocational education on youth work
2. Tertiary education for youth work
3. Public support for non-formal learning
4. Identifiable and sustainable career paths

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## Group 2. Strong practice architectures, room for development on certain level

- Austria
- Belgium (Flemish)
- Belgium (German)
- Czech Republic
- Iceland
- Liechtenstein
- Malta
- Portugal
- Russian Federation
- Serbia
- Sweden
- The Netherlands

1. Usually legislative definitions
2. Competency description and/or
3. Quality assurance work

Associations of youth workers

1. Usually vocational education on youth work and/or
2. Tertiary education for youth work
3. Usually public support for non-formal learning
4. Usually identifiable and sustainable career paths



## Group 3. Practice architectures where some parts have been developed

Armenia
Bulgaria
Latvia
Lithuania
Norway
Slovenia
The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Turkey

1. Usually legislative definitions
2. In some cases competency description and/or
3. Quality assurance

In some cases associations of youth workers

1. Usually vocational education on youth work and/or
2. Tertiary education for youth work
3. In some cases support for non-formal learning
4. Usually no identifiable and sustainable career paths



## Group 4. Practice architectures in the need of development

Albania

Azerbaijan

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Croatia

Cyprus

Georgia

Greece

Italy

Moldova

Montenegro

Poland

Romania

Ukraine

1. Usually legislative definitions

In some cases  
associations of  
youth workers

1. In some cases tertiary education  
for youth work  
2. In some cases public support for  
non-formal learning



# Thank you.

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