

## Fostering social integration of young migrants and refugees: Youth work and cross-sectoral cooperation as sources of innovation

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### Executive Summary

Integration measures for the target group of young immigrants and refugees often focus on education and labour market integration, while social integration is neglected in comparison. However, targeted integration measures often have difficulty in actually reaching the target group, particularly those young people from lower socio-economic strata who face the biggest challenges. In this context, out-of-school youth work is uniquely placed to reach and work with young people in ways other sectors often cannot, due to its voluntary, non-formal and capabilities-based approach. In youth work contexts, migrant youth is not addressed because they are migrants, but because of their specific interests or needs. Based on a project implemented by ICMPD in Austria from 2018 to 2020<sup>1</sup>, this policy brief discusses how youth work can contribute to integration and what recent contributions have been made to the policy field at the European level. It then presents good practice examples on how cooperation between youth work and integration policy fields can look like and finishes with recommendations on how to improve cooperation between different policy fields in the context.

### Introduction

After the “crisis mode” of 2015 and consecutive years, with its almost exclusive focus on reception had abated, the more long-term perspectives for the new arrivals moved to the centre of public debates in EU Member States: Who are these new arrivals? How can long-term educational, social and labour market integration be ensured? One dimension that gradually became apparent was the young age structure of asylum applicants in the European

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<sup>1</sup> The project “*Youth Work in the context of Integration*” (YRMA) was implemented by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) in conjunction with the Austrian Federal Ministry for Labour, Family and Youth between December 2018 and November 2020. Focusing on the four federal provinces Salzburg, Upper Austria, Vorarlberg and Vienna, it aimed at improving the cooperation of the youth-work sector and the sector of immigrant integration and at establishing an overarching and sustainable cooperation structure between the sectors and the respective federal and provincial administrations. The project was based on literature analysis and stakeholder interviews as the main source for understanding of the background and challenges, and the development of regional and federal cooperation networks representing main stakeholders and actors in the field, which met in a number of workshops and meetings in order to develop action programmes and recommendations.

Union. According to EUROSTAT, out of the 1.9 million people who received international protection in the EU between 2015 and 2018, more than 80% were under the age of 34.<sup>2</sup> In Austria, for instance, 45% of all asylum seekers in 2016 were between 18 and 34 years old and another 42% were minors<sup>3</sup>, leaving only 12% of asylum seekers in the age group of over 34-year-olds.

This demographic reality has brought a renewed focus on youth integration. The main target dimensions have been education and labour market integration of young refugees, and rightly so. However, next to formal education and job training, youth work can be seen as an important – and often overlooked – policy area within most Member States when it comes to fostering social integration of young migrants and refugees – and ultimately, supporting social cohesion. Definitions and tasks differ between countries, but youth work is usually described as a provider of out-of-school education and leisure activities. The age of the target group also varies from country to country and the EU youth strategy refrains from defining a specific age group. For its Erasmus+ Youth in action programme, the EU is using the cohort of 13-30 year-olds as a main target group, although different age limits may apply depending on the different types of activities.<sup>4</sup> Due to its voluntary, target group orientated, non-formal and capabilities-based approach, youth work is able to reach and work with young people in ways other sectors often cannot.

When working with young migrants and refugees, being born abroad or even qualifying as a 2<sup>nd</sup> generation immigrant because of parents' nativity in a foreign country is often used as shorthand to distinguish youths with specific needs. However, when analysing key areas of integration such as participation in education, labour market participation, housing and health, and key demographic indicators, young immigrants are actually characterised by a great diversity in terms of background and living circumstances, just like immigrants as a whole.<sup>5</sup> It is therefore advisable to shift the focus from those foreign-born or with "migration backgrounds" to a perspective of diversity, as a whole. The common denominator among

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<sup>2</sup> European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2019): Integration of young refugees in the EU: good practices and challenges. Vienna (FRA), p.9. [https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra\\_uploads/fra-2019-integration-young-refugees\\_en.pdf](https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2019-integration-young-refugees_en.pdf) (November 2020)

<sup>3</sup> European Parliament Directorate-General for Internal Policies, Policy Department A: Economic and Scientific Policy (2017): Integration of Refugees in Austria, Germany and Sweden: Comparative Analysis. Brussels (EP), p.16. [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/614200/IPOL\\_STU\(2018\)614200\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2018/614200/IPOL_STU(2018)614200_EN.pdf) (November 2020)

<sup>4</sup> European Commission (2020): Erasmus+ Programme Guide. Brussels (EC), p.21. [https://www.jugendinaktion.at/images/doku/erasmus\\_programme\\_guide\\_2020\\_v3\\_en.pdf](https://www.jugendinaktion.at/images/doku/erasmus_programme_guide_2020_v3_en.pdf) (November 2020)

<sup>5</sup> Perching, Bernhard (2019): Youth work in the context of integration. Report on the current situation of immigrant youth in Austria – demography – education – labour market – housing – health. Vienna (ICMPD), p.75. [https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/1\\_2018/YRMA\\_Situation-Analysis-Report\\_EN.pdf](https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/1_2018/YRMA_Situation-Analysis-Report_EN.pdf) (November 2020)

young migrants and refugees are their youth-related needs. This reflects the approach long taken by youth work.

However, the role of youth work in supporting young people's integration processes is largely unknown to other actors and its relevance is underestimated by other policy fields. This is one of the main results of a 24-month, SRSP<sup>6</sup> -funded project aiming to support Austrian authorities in improving their capacity to connect and coordinate the actors involved in youth work and the migrant-refugee integration. . A nationwide structure bringing together all relevant youth and integration actors, including the formal education sector, the labour market sector, the police and health services was still missing in Austria.

Presenting lessons gathered in the Austrian context and through study visits to Belgium, Germany and Sweden, the aim of this policy brief is to highlight the innovative potential of youth work in fostering integration and social cohesion, to present the state of play at EU level and to show the innovative potential of cross-sectoral cooperation in the field.

## How youth work and integration processes of young migrants and refugees interlink

Youth work covers a broad set of activities of a social, cultural, educational or political nature by, with and for young people. Its aim is to help young people reach their full potential by encouraging personal development, autonomy, initiative and participation in society. It usually takes place in the form of out-of-school education and leisure activities, and it usually does not differentiate whether the participants are native or foreign-born. Neither youth work nor **integration** are subject of EU legislation. In spite of being a very diverse policy field, which is differently organised in each EU Member State, youth work functions under certain premises, namely:

- participation is voluntary – young people choose to participate;
- the work takes place where the young people are;
- and it recognises that the young person and the youth worker are partners in a learning process.<sup>7</sup>

Youth is more than the transition from childhood to adulthood; it is also the phase in which young people start to actively participate in society. Youth work accompanies children and

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<sup>6</sup> European Commission Directorate-General REFORM, Structural Reform Support Programme (SRSP) [https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes/overview-funding-programmes/structural-reform-support-programme-srsp\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes/overview-funding-programmes/structural-reform-support-programme-srsp_en) (November 2020)

<sup>7</sup> Council of the European Union (2018): Council conclusions on the role of youth work in the context of migration and refugee matters. (2018/C 441/03) [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52013XG0614\(02\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52013XG0614(02)&from=EN) (November 2020) and European Commission, Youth Work [https://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/implementation/work\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/youth/policy/implementation/work_en) (November 2020)

young people of all backgrounds during their transition process and aims for their full participation in all areas of life as well as promoting social cohesion between different generations. Hence, the field of youth work inherently contributes to ongoing “integration-at-work”.

In Austria, youth work has always been open to young people from all origins, yet often, the participants are from challenged socio-economic backgrounds since youth work works through low-threshold activities. Young people from immigrant/refugee families have thus become a main target group of youth work in recent decades. Youth work has many years of expertise in dealing with diversity among young people, for instance by focusing on gender aspects, intercultural communication, patterns of discrimination and conflict resolution.<sup>8</sup> By acknowledging the differences in terms of social and cultural background and origin, but explicitly putting a focus on the common features of young people, youth work contributes directly to inclusiveness.

### Recognition of the youth work-integration nexus at EU Level

At EU level and within the youth work sector, this contribution of youth work to the integration and social cohesion overall has been widely acknowledged. Several examples on how youth work can make a difference in the context of integration can be found for instance in a publication by an EU Expert Group set up under the European Union work plan for youth for 2016-2018. The Expert Group collected best practice examples from EU Member States, dealing with young migrants and their integration into society. It further developed a practical toolbox for youth workers and submitted recommendations for policy-makers on the topic. The focus of the recommendations is on forming cross-sectoral partnerships along four dimensions where youth work makes and can make a concrete contribution. These four dimensions concern the different stages in which young migrants find themselves and include the society of the host country.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Bundesweites Netzwerk Offene Jugendarbeit (boJA) (2016): Erstens Jung und Zweitens Geflüchtet. Chancen und Handlungsmöglichkeiten für ein gelungenes Zusammenleben in der Gemeinde. Vienna (boJA), p.11. [https://www.boja.at/sites/default/files/wissen/2020-01/boja\\_Leitfaden\\_2016\\_web.pdf](https://www.boja.at/sites/default/files/wissen/2020-01/boja_Leitfaden_2016_web.pdf) (November 2020)

<sup>9</sup> See European Commission Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (2019): The contribution of youth work in the context of migration and refugee matters. A practical toolbox for youth workers and recommendations for policymakers: results of the expert group set up under the European Union work plan for youth for 2016-2018 <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/1bcaf566-6a29-11e9-9f05-01aa75ed71a1> (November 2020)

Based on the Expert Group's recommendations, the Council of the European Union adopted Conclusions on the role of youth work in the context of migration and refugee matters<sup>10</sup> in 2018. The Council Conclusions highlight that all goals and premises that are valid for youth work are also valid for the work with young migrants and refugees. They recognise the positive effects of youth work on the integration processes of young migrants and refugees and formulate measures, which should be taken by Member States and the European Commission in order to allow youth work to develop its full potential. Measures underscore that youth work in the context needs the following:

- specialised knowledge, skills and competences to engage in long-term relationships with young people, including young refugees and other third country nationals, at all stages of their process;
- stable frameworks of legal rights and safe spaces that allow the participation in youth work activities for young refugees and other third country nationals;
- policies that enable and support the autonomy of young people, including young refugees and other third country nationals, and their active democratic participation in shaping policies; and various forms of topic-oriented, cross-sector contact and exchange between youth workers and youth stakeholders.<sup>11</sup>

### Examples of cross-sectoral cooperation: Following a holistic approach

Young migrants and refugees are often affected by several policy areas at the same time in the course of their integration process. In order to put the needs of those young people at the centre of all measures concerning them, requires active coordination of activities among the involved sectors and different administrative levels.<sup>12</sup> This is especially true for horizontal policy fields such as youth and integration. How can such cooperation be conceptualised at the policy level?

Both sectors do not fall under EU competency, but main documents at the EU level highlight the relevance of cross-sectoral cooperation within and between the two fields. The 2019-2027 European Youth Strategy reflects the need to improve cross-sector cooperation in its overall objective at all levels of decision-making to improve the impact of policy decisions on young

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<sup>10</sup> Council of the European Union (2018): Council conclusions on the role of youth work in the context of migration and refugee matters. (2018/C 441/03) [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52013XG0614\(02\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52013XG0614(02)&from=EN) (November 2020)

<sup>11</sup> ibid

<sup>12</sup> EU-CoE Youth Partnership (2019): Guidelines on working with young refugees and migrants – Fostering cross-sectoral co-operation. p.14 <https://pjp-eu.coe.int/documents/42128013/47262325/FINAL+Guidelines+working+with+young+refugees+and+migrants.pdf/08d37000-706d-2a06-ae51-6b1e43752bb6> (November 2020)

people<sup>13</sup>. In the integration field, too, young people are considered as a special target group with their own needs, potentials and challenges. The principal basis for EU integration policy is the Action Plan for the Integration of Third Country Nationals<sup>14</sup>. One of the objectives of the Action Plan is to strengthen cooperation with relevant stakeholders. The Action Plan has thus made it possible to harmonise integration measures in different policy fields at EU level. This also includes activities in the youth sector, for example through a special call for proposals to promote social inclusion in the framework of Erasmus+. A main element of the Council Conclusions on the role of youth work in the context of migration and refugee matters is that successful integration of young people needs cross-sectoral cooperation. Other international organisations, such as the Council of Europe, also underscore the importance of cross-sectoral collaboration. Three of the 50 recommendations of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers on supporting young refugees in transition to adulthood (recommendations 6, 42 and 43) explicitly point out the need for cooperation between the youth work sector and other sectors in order to support young refugees and migrants.<sup>15</sup>

There are already a number of examples of cooperation mechanisms, which can broadly be placed within either the horizontal or the vertical level. Horizontal cooperation refers to cooperation between actors from different policy areas within a political-administrative level. Both public authorities and external partners – e.g. civil society organisations or religious communities – work together to strengthen social cohesion in their area of responsibility. Since both integration and youth work take place at the local level, the municipality plays a particularly important role as the coordinating unit for the integration efforts of all relevant actors. However, in order to establish the necessary structural conditions that make it possible to live together in diversity and to make the best use of existing resources, mechanisms need to be in place that allow cooperation with other levels of administration. On the one hand, vertical cooperation may facilitate the exchange between administrative levels and the dissemination of examples of good practice. On the other hand, it can support municipalities with additional expertise and financial resources for setting up or expanding their cross-

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<sup>13</sup> Resolution of the Council of the European Union and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on a framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2018): The European Union Youth Strategy 2019-2027. (2018/C 456/01) [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:42018Y1218\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:42018Y1218(01)&from=EN) (November 2020)

<sup>14</sup> See Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions (2016): Action Plan on the integration of third country nationals (COM(2016) 377 final) [file:///C:/Users/clarya/Downloads/communication\\_action\\_plan\\_integration\\_third-country\\_nationals\\_en.pdf](file:///C:/Users/clarya/Downloads/communication_action_plan_integration_third-country_nationals_en.pdf) (November 2020)

<sup>15</sup> Council of Europe (2019): Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on supporting young refugees in transition to adulthood. [https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result\\_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016809416e1](https://search.coe.int/cm/Pages/result_details.aspx?ObjectID=09000016809416e1) (November 2020)

sectoral cooperation. Whether a more structured form of cooperation is needed between specific actors in one place or between different political and administrative levels always depends on the context. The type of the ideal cooperation and coordination mechanism also varies depending on the setting. Given its resource-intensiveness, networking can never be an end in itself. Being clear about the goal of any cooperation activity should therefore be a priority.

To understand what cross-sectoral cooperation might look like in practice in the context of youth integration, a number of different models of cooperation from different EU Member States, namely Austria, Belgium, Finland, Germany and Sweden were analysed during the project. The analysed models aim at improving coordination between specific actors concerned by a certain topic in the youth or integration ambit. All analysed examples have both horizontal and vertical cooperation elements, which interlock with each other. Some cooperation models focus on the exchange of information, others allow their members to agree and decide on concrete measures. Methods differ in their institutional and funding structure.

In Germany, the provincial government of North Rhine-Westphalia, for instance, created several funding programmes that specifically support the goal of greater cooperation between actors at the municipal level. This includes a programme that specifically finances cross-sectoral initiatives with young migrants and refugees under the leadership of youth work institutions in the municipalities. The programme strengthens the role of youth work as an official integration actor in the municipality and allows professionals of other sectors and volunteers to learn from the methods of youth works.<sup>16</sup>

Another example from the region is a programme funding strategic inter-sectoral case management for young migrants and refugees in order to identify needs in the system and work out optimisation processes. In this way, practical knowledge about successful forms of cooperation, but also about possible gaps in the system can be identified, adapted where necessary, and transferred to other municipalities.<sup>17</sup>

Other methods identified in Germany and Austria include the establishment of networks at different administrative levels, i.e. for all educational institutions within a neighbourhood,

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<sup>16</sup> See Landschaftsverband Rheinland (2019): Landesprogramm: Wertevermittlung, Demokratiebildung und Prävention sexualisierter Gewalt in der und durch die Jugendhilfe. Aufruf zur Antragsstellung: Rundschreiben vom 04. Oktober 2019. [https://www.lvr.de/de/nav\\_main/jugend\\_2/jugendfrderung/finanziellefrderung/wertevermittlung\\_und\\_praevention/inhaltsseite\\_32.jsp](https://www.lvr.de/de/nav_main/jugend_2/jugendfrderung/finanziellefrderung/wertevermittlung_und_praevention/inhaltsseite_32.jsp) (May 2020)

<sup>17</sup> See North Rhine-Westphalia Ministry for Children, Family, Refugees and Integration (5.9.2018): „Einwanderung gestalten NRW“: Staatssekretär Andreas Bothe dankt zwölf Modellkommunen. Pressemeldung. <https://www.mkffi.nrw/einwanderung-gestalten-nrw-staatssekretaer-andreas-bothe-dankt-zwoelfmodellkommunen> (May 2020)

with the aim of facilitating transitions between different stages of the education process and better linking formal school and out-of-school education with each other.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to promoting horizontal cooperation, there are cooperation models focusing on improving coordination between the various political levels. Sweden, for example, installed institutions at the national level, which focus on supporting municipalities either financially and/or with their expertise.<sup>19</sup> The aim of the Swedish government support is to help set up local networks in order to tackle certain challenges, such as high levels of unemployment or segregation issues. The problem-solving approach with which those institutions work offers a holistic approach in addressing several challenges young (migrant) people encounter.

In Finland, the establishment of a platform operating across all political levels aims at coordinating EU and national funding related to integration measures. This platform helps to create synergies between different funding programmes and therefore leads to greater efficiency in the use of financial resources.<sup>20</sup> More examples can be found in the practical toolbox, developed by the EU Expert Group on the contribution of youth work in the context of migration and refugee matters and in the publication “Models of inter-sectoral cooperation in the field of youth integration – analysis of characteristics & success criteria”<sup>21</sup>.

The direct added value of cross-sectoral cooperation in the context of youth integration comes from several aspects:

- Resources from different sectors can be pooled (personnel, space, etc.);
- The cooperating institutions experience more visibility and recognition;
- New target groups can be reached through regular exchange and networking with other sectors;
- Exchanging information about the target group leads to more tailor-made offers and a better referral system between the institutions involved in the integration process of young people;
- An overview of all offers, possibilities and paths for young people can be created;

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<sup>18</sup> See for example: Ein Quadratkilometer Bildung, <http://www.ein-quadratkilometer-bildung.org/> (May 2020) or Wiener Bildungsgrätzl, <https://www.wien.gv.at/bildung-forschung/bildungs-graetzl.html> (May 2020)

<sup>19</sup> See Delegationen mot segregation, <https://www.delmos.se/> (May 2020) and Delegationen för unga och nyanlända till arbete, <https://www.dua.se/> (May 2020)

<sup>20</sup> See Marangozov, Rachel (Oktober 2018): Effectively Coordinating EU funds: A case study of Finland. ESF Migrants Thematic Network. [https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/filedepot\\_download/897/2093](https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/filedepot_download/897/2093) (May 2020)

<sup>21</sup> See Clary, Antonia (2020): Modelle intersektoraler Zusammenarbeit im Bereich der Integration von Jugendlichen – Analyse der Merkmale und Erfolgskriterien. Vienna (ICMPD). [https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/YRMA\\_Analyse\\_Erfolgskriterien\\_Clary\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/user_upload/YRMA_Analyse_Erfolgskriterien_Clary_FINAL.pdf) (2020)



- Youth work institutions may benefit from cooperation with players from other policy areas through additional funding opportunities (e.g. for low-threshold measures);
- A mutual understanding of the basic approaches and concepts can be developed and overlaps and duplication of work can be avoided;
- Measures have a greater impact when they are coordinated horizontally across all policy areas.

Thus, ideally, funding streams can be optimised for both policy fields and the quality of measures in each sector can be improved at the same time.

In order to foster cross-sectoral cooperation, it is particularly important to change the general perception of youth work as a less important policy area and highlight the transfer potential of its work with young migrants and refugees into other policy fields. For example, youth workers often have a lot of (implicit) knowledge about the different groups of young migrants and refugees and their social, ethnic and religious characteristics. This knowledge and expertise about the target group can be valuable for other actors involved in the integration process of young people. Moreover, youth workers manage to reach out to young people better than professionals of other policy areas due to their target group orientation and the associated creation of suitable offers. Consequently, schools, competent areas of labour market promotion and other relevant players, which are well linked with the youth work sector reach those young people much easier.

### **Drawing on youth work as a source of innovation for integration efforts**

The realities and practices of youth work and integration vary, depending on the local, regional and national context. The aim of cooperation is not to flatten this variety.<sup>22</sup> All policy fields involved in youth integration, however, are mutually dependent on each other and influence one another. Therefore, stable frameworks allowing interaction and cooperation between those policy fields need to be established if not yet in place in order to make the best use of available resources. The methods and premises of youth work mean that it inherently contributes to integration processes.

However, in order to transfer some of the successful methods of youth work to other sectors, some fundamental prerequisites need to be in place. Firstly, a new attitude towards children and young people is needed. Children and young people are a full part of society already today and not merely a target group of certain offers and measures. In youth work they are already accepted as such. Other sectors still see them more as society's future rather than its

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<sup>22</sup> Council of the European Union (2018): Council conclusions on the role of youth work in the context of migration and refugee matters. (2018/C 441/03) [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52013XG0614\(02\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52013XG0614(02)&from=EN) (November 2020)

presence. Secondly, to integrate young people into society, new formats for participation and political involvement have to be found. Youth work offers many innovative methods on how to include young people in decision-making processes. Last, it is crucial to acknowledge youth work not as a functionally segmented system for leisure activities separated from the school, the workplace or the family, but to understand it as part of a person's socialisation process, which includes all aspects of daily life.

## Policy recommendations

There are several points that can be learned from the Austrian, German, Belgium and Swedish examples.

**Cross-sectoral cooperation is crucial when it comes to policy-making and the implementation of measures in horizontal policy fields such as youth and integration.** To support young migrants and refugees in their social integration in the best possible way, a holistic approach needs to be adopted, which focuses on the needs of children and young people. This requires that formal education, youth work and labour market sectors as well as all other relevant policy fields to work together within a legally binding and adequately financed institutional framework that ensures regular exchange between all players involved in the integration process of young migrants and refugees.

**All actors involved need to see what they would gain from intensified cooperation efforts with other policy fields.** Setting up such a framework strongly depends on the political will of the responsible authorities. A strengthened dialogue between youth workers, educators, integration workers and other relevant actors demands mutual recognition of approaches and methods, which is not always the case today. Targeted measures are needed to build trust between and to impart knowledge about the work of respective sectors.

**This also requires finding appropriate formats for cross-sectoral exchanges at all levels.** The policy recommendations<sup>23</sup>, as the final project output, name the establishment of an inter-sectoral platform as the most important factor to enable a structured dialogue between all relevant stakeholders. This also involves a continuous professional and content-related exchange, as well as improved documentation of project experiences and good practice.

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<sup>23</sup> Developed under the guidance of ICMPD, those recommendations are the product of a concerted effort of many different officials and civil society actors and should help paving the ground to generate political will among decision-makers: Youth work in the context of integration of young refugees and migrants in Austria – Policy recommendations. Vienna (ICMPD). [https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/YRMA\\_Policy\\_recommendations\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.icmpd.org/fileadmin/user_upload/YRMA_Policy_recommendations_FINAL.pdf) (November 2020)

**Financing needs to be long-term.** In terms of financing cross-sectoral cooperation, it is necessary to consider that change needs time and the length of funding programmes should reflect that. This is especially true in the case of youth and integration work. Making use of existing EU programmes and including private companies and their foundations may be another way of raising funds for integration measures for young migrants and refugees. Moreover, funding authorities should coordinate their activities whenever working on cross-thematic projects.

**Finally, successful cooperation requires an inclusive understanding** of the term “integration”, focussing on all young people in recognition of their diversity, regardless of whether they have are migrants or not.

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