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Kati Nõlvak: Beruf Medienpädagog*in: Estland/Estonia

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Kati Nõlvak, Estonian Youth Work Center

My personal perspective on my job as a media educational worker

My name is Kati Nõlvak (30). I'm a chief expert in Estonian Youth Work Center (EYWC), my main field of expertise is smart youth work. Estonia itself is a small yet innovative country: population of 1,3 million people, almost 21 percent are young people between seven and 26 years – and it is known for its digital achievements. We can also be proud of our youth work policy as Estonia won the Future Policy Award 2019 acknowledgment from the World Future Council as outstanding policy plan for youth empowerment.

EYWC is the organization that is leading the youth work developments in Estonia and my main effort goes into developing smart youth work inside and also outside our country. My main target group is youth workers themselves and how to support them and their organizations on the local level to develop solutions aimed at youth, and also to develop support systems to solve the needs related to youth workers' competencies and work methods. For example, we guide local level youth organizations to develop projects to raise youth's digital skills through different fundings. A lot of projects have been on the topic of digital content creation which goes hand in hand with information and data literacy. A rising trend is gamification and e-sports and what could young people learn from gaming.

On a wider scale, we are also really keen on developing the quality, functioning and efficacy of youth work and gaining better knowledge of youth through different digital solutions. One of our questions of interest lies in gathering and analyzing data for future decision making. For example, we are working together with our national statistics department and made a digital solution, where, for example, local municipalities can see different datasets about their youth work situation. The datasets are automatically drawn from different national databases and are automatically updated as the source database changes.

Of course, we do all this with a small team and I try to give my best to our team's effort. To do so, my skillset varies from different education forms as my bachelor's degree is on business management and before going to university I was already an active citizen and stood for the rights of young people on a local level. As I went to university, I was already working as a youth worker in a local level youth center. As a lot of the youth workers, so did I get my main knowledge about youth work and youth themselves through practice, self-learning, and from numerous non-formal trainings including different International youth work projects. Currently, I'm finishing my masters in educational technology. This has helped a lot in understanding the digital world and its possibilities and development needs, and also how to support Estonia's youth workers.

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