

Chapter 8

Professional Associations for Youth Work

8.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the building of collective professional identities for youth workers and the role of professional associations in upholding the integrity and quality of the profession. This is a means of affirming the Right to Association enshrined in the UDHR and other human rights instruments as it applies to collegiality in the youth work profession. Twelve countries out of the sample (34 per cent) had youth workers' associations that help safeguard the integrity and quality of the profession.

8.2 What is a professional association?

Professional associations provide a resource, a backup and a foundation for professionals who may share common interests and values. Associations are typically created to provide an organised structure to monitor the training and practice of a group of individuals from a specific occupation in order to safeguard the quality and integrity of the profession. Volunteers who are appropriately qualified can sometimes also be members of a professional association.

Professional associations also play a crucial role in defining and regulating the nature of practice, validation, qualification and certification, acting as a gateway to the profession.

The Commonwealth's publication *Establishing a Professional Youth Worker Association: A 12-Step Guide* (Commonwealth Youth Programme Asia, 2012), states that:

At the foundations of a successful professionalising process lies the collective strength of youth work practitioners participating in defining the parameters of their profession. This could include participatory decisions on required competencies for youth work, establishing parallel qualifications, and assuring the quality of training and practice. Such collective decision making ensures the establishment of a vibrant and responsive youth service that can serve young people optimally. In this sense, collective organisation also precedes other decisions in the professionalising process.

Professional associations are sometimes formed in order to allow members to reach a common goal whether for legislative, educational, social and/or economic reasons. Out of these bigger goals, professionals can also attain a higher status, influence and authority of the association and its membership.

Overall, the professional association prioritises its membership through advocacy, capacity building, framing competency standards, establishing Codes

of Ethics, and so on. This includes the representation of marginalised individuals and groups working within the profession.

Professional associations typically 'police' practice. However, sometimes they can take the role of 'deregistering', suspending or striking off those who do not abide by ethical standards, professional codes of practice or cross the moral boundaries of public trust. This being the case, the professional association is;

- **A source of authority** – defining the parameters (limits and extensions) of professional activity,
- **A means of ensuring integrity** – informing and guiding the character of practice,
- **An interpretative body** – promoting recognition and comprehension of what the profession does (its social function) how it operates and who might deliver practice.

Professional associations can have a lot of influence and authority. But very straightforwardly, a professional association is a group of people, coming from similar practice backgrounds, under the auspices of maintaining and developing their shared interests, promoting and seeking to heighten the understanding of their common principles, values, perspectives and skills.

Professional associations can contribute to the following:

- Preserve and advance standards of their vocation
- Engender and sustain ethical practice, building codes of behaviour and professional standards informed by agreed ethical standards
- Inform employers, government, trainers, associated and related fields, clients and the public in general about professional expectations and models of service delivery
- Uphold and expand recognition and status of the profession
- Generate and support relevant professional research
- Provide multidimensional forums/platforms/support networks to share and facilitate the preservation and advancement of best practice
- Frame, influence, advance and inform members about policy, technical and theoretical innovation
- Provide practicing professionals, students of professional practice and those in training with relatively easy access to a database which they can join and make their profession and personal contact details available to other people and potential clients/users/funders and employers
- Offer career information, other learning opportunities
- Offer in-service training and introductory courses/ promotional material for people wanting to begin a career in youth work

- Provide a validating service for other training/education providers and advice to organisations, regional and national government (Commonwealth Youth Programme Asia, 2012, pp. 6–9).

As such, a professional association is a supportive organisation which can be helpful to an individual, but also (and perhaps more importantly) professional associations can help individuals and organisations:

stay true to and remain consistent with their own values, principles and ethics. When viewed on a broader scale you can see that the effect of the work of professional organisations can have important social impact in terms of promoting best practice, equality and justice (Ibid, p. 8).

More generally, a professional association may:

- Further the interests of its members while promoting public interest
- Make the area of professional practice better understood and available to a wider constituency
- Act as a means of promoting the security and protecting and promoting the position and status of professionals
- Influence local, regional, national and international policy, professional certification, education and training
- Endorse and uphold the integrity of the profession represented (Ibid).

In this way, professional associations can have a considerable reach and an ability to build, strengthen and develop practice, far more than individuals working alone.

Defining a professional association's membership, particularly in contexts where youth work may not even be recognised as a profession, is difficult. This process of identification is important because many people, all over the world, practise youth work without local or national recognition. Sometimes, individuals do not even understand themselves to be youth workers, and fail to completely recognise the complex skills and knowledge they in fact use for working with young people.

Such circumstances curtail the potential political and social influence of youth workers because without a professional identity, an able and committed youth worker risks never being seen to be more than a sort of surrogate social worker, teaching assistant or a kind but relatively directionless 'do-gooder'.

There are two main steps when looking to identify the membership of a professional youth workers' association:

- Ascertain the skills, attitudes, knowledge, clientele, principles and ethics that might together constitute youth work practice nationally, regionally and/or worldwide. At that point the association is in a position to begin to recruit from its designated target group.
- Identify the Constituency: A group of people will need to identify themselves as youth workers. This can be achieved by reviewing potential members' professional

concerns, aims, client groups, ethics and principles against the agreed standards (Commonwealth Youth Programme Asia, 2012, p.9).

In many professions, entry to employment is reliant on membership of a professional association. Often, qualifications enabling entry to and promotion within a profession are prescribed and/or wholly or partly validated by these associations.

At the same time, entry to a professional association (and so a profession) is often restricted to those of 'good character'. This is assured by references, peer review and criminal/police checks. It would of course not be protective of potential or actual clients to have a convicted rapist taking on the role of a medical practitioner or a person with a record of serial fraud being welcomed into a fraternity of accountants. Likewise, one would hope that people with convictions involving children and young people would not be able unquestioned to gain employment as a youth worker.

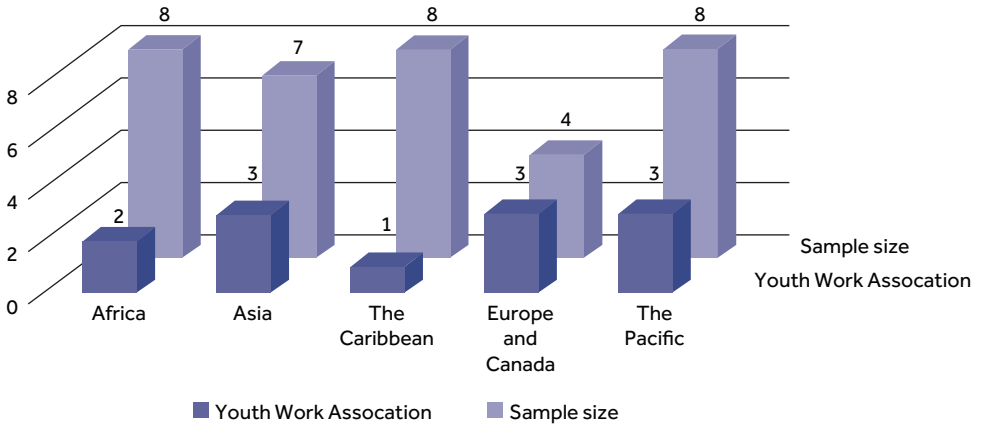
Traditionally, the rationale of professional associations is to assure safe, fair and effective services for the clientele/public. As such, professional associations are more than talking shops, or debating societies. The membership and governance is in the hands of practitioners, not (in the main) interested or concerned lay people or those distant or detached from practice (academics, civil servants and so on). Neither is a professional association a trade union. The latter is primarily concerned with the salaries and conditions of its membership, while the former exists for the benefit of clients; a strong profession is valued because of its service to clients, but a trade union is judged by its members to the extent it preserves and enhances wages and conditions of its members. However, professional associations may in some cases participate in trade-union like activities such as collectively negotiating standard fees or salaries and conditions on behalf of their members. For example, in Australia, the Youth Workers Association (YWA) was instrumental in negotiating the provision of a pay and conditions award category for youth workers (Corney, 2017, pp. 162–172).

In effect, because a professional association is concerned with the status of the profession, it also has an interest in the development and maintenance of the social and/or economic status of practitioners, which might be understood to include salaries (one straightforward indicator of the comparability between like professions – in the case of youth work this might include social work and teaching).

Figure 8.1 Professional associations and trade unions – the focus



Figure 8.2 Regional trends – No. of countries with national youth workers' associations



8.3 An overview of youth work associations in the Commonwealth

Commonwealth-wide, the notion of national youth workers' associations is in a state of development (compared to professional organisation in other similar occupations). Nevertheless, while some associations are emergent, others are relatively active, while a few (for example the Maltese Association of Youth Workers) have a fair amount of influence. Out of the sample, 12 countries (34 per cent) had active professional associations for youth workers. Figure 8.2 illustrates existing associations against the sample and demonstrates the need for further action in establishing national associations.

8.4 Regional trends

In the Commonwealth Africa region, South Africa and Zambia could claim existing professional associations for youth workers. At the time of writing, Uganda was clearly demonstrating interest in establishing a professional body for youth work.

Table 8.1 Number & membership of youth work associations – Africa

Country	Number of professional youth workers' associations	Membership
Ghana	0	0
Kenya	0	0
Malawi	0	0
Nigeria	0	0
South Africa	1	1350
Tanzania	0	0
Uganda	0	0
Zambia	1	22

The South African Youth Workers' Association (SAYWA) was formally established and launched in 1998 by the Youth Practitioner's Advocacy Group (YPAG), following six years of advocacy and lobbying for recognition and professionalisation of youth work in South Africa. YPAG was made up of groups of both non-professional youth workers and professionals in the form of social workers, academics, researchers, nurses, teachers/educators, government officials, executives of non-governmental organisations including sports and recreation coaches.

SAYWA continues to revive the Association and the membership is approximately 1350. They are in the process of formalising the provincial as well as student chapters in some institutions of higher learning in South Africa. The membership drive is also to be extended to include community-based technical, vocational education and training colleges (TVET colleges). Activities so far have included

- Developing a contextual analysis of youth work practice,
- Developing a draft youth work policy that is under review,
- Involvement in the development, review and evaluation of the youth policy framework documents and other related policies that now include commitments to professionalise the youth work sector,
- Promoting best practices in working with young people through local and national consultations summits and other interventions,
- Championing the establishment of an oversight body to play an advisory role for the rollout of the B-Tech Diploma for child and youth care at selected universities in South Africa,
- Developing standard practice for the youth sector,
- Involvement in the review and development of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) levels for youth and community development,
- Drafting a draft code of ethics in collaboration with the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA), provincial and national governments, and NGOs,
- Participating in the development of a draft Bill for the Youth Work Profession for consideration and endorsement by the National Assembly, Parliament.

The Zambia Youth Workers Association (ZYWA) was formed in September 2006 after the realisation of the potential for abuse in an unregulated profession. Some of the key organisations involved in the formation included the Ministry of Youth, the former Commonwealth Youth Programme Regional Centre, Africa, the National Youth Development Council, and a few individuals who constituted the Technical Working group.

The objectives of the association as articulated in its Constitution are:

- To promote, in the interest of youth development and empowerment, the fundamental principles of human rights and fundamental freedoms as enshrined in Articles 2–9 of the African Youth Charter.
- To advance the quality of youth work practice throughout Zambia.

Currently, the association has a membership of 30 on the national electronic register which was officially launched at the 4th General Assembly in November 2016 by the Director of Youth and Sport from the Ministry of Youth, Sport and Child Development. The need for a further membership drive is keenly felt by the Association’s committee.

In consultation with relevant Ministry and other stake holders, ZYWA developed its constitution and Code of Ethics in line with national and international provisions including the directions set by the Commonwealth’s Plan of Action for Youth Empowerment (PAYE). The Association also launched a report, *A state of Youth Work in Zambia* during its fourth General Assembly which elected the new executive committee in 2016.

In general in Africa, other member states are also appreciating the importance of a professional association and are moving towards organisation.

8.4.1 Asia

In Asia, Sri Lanka and Singapore report existing and operational youth workers’ associations, and India indicated that there is a non-traditional association of a collective of practitioners advancing a specific asset-based model of youth work. Malaysia was working towards the establishment of a professional association as a result of commitments to youth work in the country’s new youth policy.

India does not have a traditional youth workers’ association. However, a group that has been working closely with youth work associations in the Commonwealth is ComMutiny – the Youth Collective (CYC), a group of youth-led organisations that work together to promote youth work processes and methodologies as articulated in the 5th Space previously mentioned – one of the best articulated practice methodologies for youth work in the global South that the baseline has been able to identify.

The development of youth work in Malaysia is at a critical stage. Structures are being put in place for youth worker development, given the political will to invest in the practice. This, together with initiatives such as plans for a professional youth work board that incorporates a number of youth work associations, indicates that the sector

Table 8.2 Number & membership of youth workers’ associations – Asia

Country	Number of professional youth workers’ associations	Membership
Bangladesh	0	0
India	1	25 (organisations)
Malaysia	1 (emerging)	unknown
Maldives	0	0
Pakistan	0	0
Singapore	1	154
Sri Lanka	1	33

is establishing itself as a profession. The working out of codes of ethics, monitoring and formalised professional development will advance this process.

Since 2011, a series of workshops have been conducted to develop an understanding of the concept of youth work and the functioning of the professional body. A dialogue was also initiated through the Commonwealth's former Asia Regional Centre in 2011, followed by the Commonwealth's support for consultations on competency standards.

Work is progressing in Malaysia on the development of a framework for professionalising youth work. This framework consists of definitions, roles and functions of practitioners in youth work and their professionals, branding, structure, occupational standards, training and education, management, accreditation and certification, as well as a governing Board on Youth Work. A number of specialised professional youth work associations cutting across practice, policy-making, research, teaching and extension will be established and incorporated as part of the structure in the overall framework. This is being done by a multi-stakeholder group as follows, whose plans also include the possible establishment of a professional governing body to monitor processes set by the framework:

- Ministry of Youth and Spots Malaysia (KBS)
- Department of Skills Development, Ministry of Human Resource, Malaysia (MOHR)
- Malaysia Youth Development Academy (Note: the academy is part of KBS)
- International Youth Centre (IYC) Malaysia (Note: KBS linked centre)
- Institute of Youth Research (IYRES) Malaysia (Note: The institute is part of KBS)
- Researchers from University Putra Malaysia (UPM)
- Other stakeholders categorised by the 10 implementer group

In Singapore, the Youth Work Association, Singapore (YWAS), registered since March 2012, was created as a result of ongoing debate for about four years on the distinct difference in competencies between social work practitioners and youth work practitioners. The YWAS was agreed upon following a week-long consultation amongst heads of youth agencies and youth work practitioners and was funded by the Singapore Workforce Development Agency.

The YWAS has a vision for 'a future in which youth work is regarded as a credible and celebrated profession'. Specifically, the association was established to:

- advocate for youth work
- set the benchmarks for quality youth work
- celebrate the joy of delivering youth work
- advance and promote the cause and development of youth work in Singapore.

The work of Singapore's Association includes:

- Promoting and participating in the education and training of those involved in the development, instruction, rehabilitation, support, mentoring, outreach, and care of youths and young people.
- Providing lectures, seminars and courses to contribute to the professional development of the membership.
- Engaging in the exchange of professional and technical knowledge and opinions through the conduct, sponsorship, or encouragement of research and publications, and through distribution of materials, including books papers and reports.
- Providing support for youth development initiatives in schools and the community via teacher/adult training, workshops, seminars and publications.

The YWAS is promoting, advocating for and facilitating the professionalisation and continuing professional development of youth workers in Singapore by:

- Supporting efforts aimed at raising public awareness and recognition of youth work as a profession.
- Maintaining a Youth Work Code of Professional Ethics for the guidance of the Association's members in terms of professional conduct.
- Representing to the relevant authorities and when necessary, the views of the youth workers.
- Facilitating the organisation of in-service training courses and other activities for the development of youth workers

A challenge seems to be the relative disconnectedness of the professional body from the State youth sector.

In Sri Lanka, the Professional Youth Workers' Association (PYWA) was formally established in 2015 after three years of preparatory work supported by the Commonwealth with the former Ministry of Youth Affairs and Skills Development and diverse youth work practitioners and youth work delivery agencies. The association aims to empower and co-ordinate professional youth workers, based on universal policies, values and guidance through participatory development, continuing education, programme evaluation and monitoring strategies in order to develop a youth work community in Sri Lanka.¹ The Open University of Sri Lanka, and the former Ministry of Youth and Skills Development were critical players in this process.

The minimum requirement for full membership is the Diploma in Youth Development Work offered by the Open University of Sri Lanka, or on consideration by the Committee. Associate membership is permitted based on a competency assessment through PYWA's Core Competency Framework.

In 2016, the Association, with the support of the Commonwealth, and ComMutiny, the Youth Collective, India, developed a short course for youth work trainers and also

worked towards the creation of a nationally led youth work training pool for ‘just-in-time’ training. The creation of the short course has been a clear demonstration of regional collaboration across youth work collectives. Integrating the training course to mainstreaming youth work mechanisms is being advocated by PYWA with the Ministry of Policy and Planning, now holding the youth portfolio.

8.4.2 The Caribbean

In the Commonwealth Caribbean region, Jamaica had an established youth workers’ association.

The Jamaica Professional Youth Workers’ Association (JPYWA) was launched in 2006 by a group of Youth Development Work Diploma graduates. The organisation very quickly began to respond to the critical need for knowledge and skills among grassroots youth workers and only pursued formalisation of the Association in 2014. The organisation has a strong non-government membership and partner base and works closely with the Government in providing technical support to its youth department. It was established in order to provide

- technical support in youth work and youth development to government and non-government entities,
- basic training for youth workers, and
- advocacy for the recognition and professionalisation of youth work

The association is in the process of developing an accredited training course (level unstipulated) aligned to competency standards, and is training assessors for accreditation with the support of the Commonwealth. It is currently developing a business plan in order to develop enterprise as a form of resource mobilisation to enhance its independence and advocacy capacity.

Table 8.3 Number/membership of youth work associations – the Caribbean

Country	Number of professional youth workers’ associations	Membership
Barbados	0	0
Belize	0	0
Dominica	0	0
Guyana	0	0
Jamaica	1	100
St Lucia	0	0
St Vincent and the Grenadines	0	0
Trinidad and Tobago	0	0

8.4.3 Europe and Canada

In Canada, nine professional associations relating to child and youth care exist, but there are no associations specifically relating to youth workers (see definition of

Table 8.4 Number/membership of youth work associations – Europe and Canada

Country	Number of professional youth workers' associations	Membership
Canada	9	3700 ²
Cyprus	0	0
Malta	1	30
UK	2	Unknown

Canadian child and youth care above). These associations have a membership around 3700 practitioners.

Although primarily concerned with Provincial matters, there is networking between the associations through the Council of Canadian Child and Youth Care Workers Associations (CCYCW). Since 1986, the CCYCW has been the national networking organisation representing child and youth care professionals in Canada through their provincial associations. The council strives to promote the association movement throughout the nation and through them promote and encourage professional development, advocacy, recognition and networking for child and youth care.³

Collectively these provincial youth and childcare bodies can be said to have an appreciable impact on the shaping and development of practice in the child and youth care field.

In Malta, the Maltese Association of Youth Workers (MAY) is perhaps the most integrated and, in terms of being a national regulator of practice, the most influential professional association in the region, and perhaps the Commonwealth.

MAY was founded in September 1998. Soon after, a statute was set up and a code of ethics drafted. Both were approved at a public seminar. Lobbying for professional status commenced around this time. MAY became involved in various tasks within governmental and non-governmental organisations, which included the review of the National Youth Policy, work and training activities for youth workers.

MAY's objectives include marketing the concept of youth work and maintaining quality standards in the profession. The organisation was instrumental in making the Youth Work Profession Act a reality (see the case study in Box 7.2).

The United Kingdom

The idea of a professional association for youth workers has been around for many years in the UK, but it was not until the second decade of the twenty-first century that the National Youth Agency (NYA) initiated a professional membership group, the Institute for Youth Work (IYW); in June 2015 the Institute for Youth Work Council took over management of this body, with the purpose of providing a professional membership organisation for youth work, aiming to drive quality standards.

The IYW is currently working to promote itself and build the network, and to register as a professional body. Membership numbers were not available at the time

of writing. However, anecdotally, while at county level there is some support (for instance Essex funds membership for all full-time youth workers) the membership remains, as a proportion of those employed in the field, relatively small, while the organisation is yet to have any influence at a policy-making level or as a gatekeeper to the occupation; it has yet to develop influence on practice or agency over the entry to, suspension or barring from practice. A strategy for a way forward was yet to be shared with the youth work sector at the time of writing.

In addition to the practitioner association, the IYW, the Professional Association of Lecturers in Youth and Community Work (TAG) is a member organisation that represents the interests of academics, educators and researchers in the field of youth and community work in the UK. The association supports and represents over 200 educators at more than 50 institutions and agencies in the UK. They seek to promote an informed understanding of youth and community work in the UK, and across the globe, through connecting membership through conferences, events and sector activity (TAG, n.d.).

Given the above it can be said that regionally in Europe and Canada the situation with regard to national youth worker associations is mixed:

- MAY in Malta is in an advanced position in terms of influence and guardianship of the profession
- In Canada youth work as a profession has no traction. Associations devoted to child and youth care workers are province-based organisations, maintaining a considerable stake in the development and quality assurance of practice, and in places gatekeeping influence.
- In the UK, the development of a professional association remains at an embryonic stage.
- Cyprus currently has no youth workers' association.

8.4.4 The Pacific

In the Pacific, Australia has two relatively advanced and well-established state (as opposed to national) youth workers' associations in the form of the Youth Workers' Association (YWA) based in Victoria and the Youth Work Western Australia (YouthWorkWA). Both YWA and YouthWorkWA⁴ have developed codes of ethics⁵ (Corney and Hoiles, 2007). The Australian Youth Affairs Coalition (AYAC), a collective of state-based youth affairs peak bodies and youth work delivery organisations, continues to have an influence on the practice of youth work through its national definition (Corney, 2014, p. 10).

In New Zealand Ara Taiohi (meaning 'pathway to and from young people'), the national peak body for youth development, succeeded in establishing the Professional Association for Youth Development Workers in 2016. It is involved in

- national programme of capacity building and workforce development-youth development champions pathways for all

Table 8.5 Number/Membership of youth work associations – the Pacific

Country	Number of professional youth workers' associations	Membership
Australia	2	400 (YWA)
Fiji	0	0
New Zealand	2	242
Papua New Guinea	0	0
Samoa	0	0
Solomon Islands	1	0
Tonga	0	0
Vanuatu	0?	0

- sector development
- restorative justice at the centre
- self-determination for youth workers regarding the core competencies that define youth development practice
- national work with qualifications providers.

Box 8.1 tells the story of the Association for Youth Workers in Aotearoa (New Zealand)

Box 8.1 The birth of a new association for youth workers in Aotearoa (New Zealand)

By Anya Satyanand, Member

‘Tuitui tangata, tuitui korowai’ (You should approach the task of bringing a group of people together with the same level care you would employ in weaving a beautiful garment.)

A new step in a long history of youth work

Youth work in Aotearoa has a rich history, an exciting present and a strong future. In 2017, we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the first code of ethics, a significant milestone that the profession is marking by launching a professional association for youth workers.

The history of youth work in Aotearoa is long and proud, and has involved the contribution and leadership of many people, networks and organisations. Youth workers are currently working collectively to build an association that genuinely reflects the aspirations and needs of this very important part of the youth development ecosystem.

Building on the work of our parent organisation, the National Youth Workers Network Aotearoa, in 2016 Ara Taiohi (the peak body for youth development)

(continued)

(continued)

launched a pilot association and extended an open invitation to youth workers across the sector to participate in the design of the association. More than 240 youth workers have become founding members, more than six times the number we originally anticipated in a process that has been marked by the enthusiasm of people who have offered their insights, help and energy.

In te reo Māori (the Māori language), the word ‘rangatiratanga’ means leadership- literally the weaving of people together. The work of constructing this association has been like weaving many different perspectives, different voices, and using the skills of many people.

Why a Professional Association?

Youth workers form a critical part of the workforce needed to support positive youth development for our young people in Aotearoa New Zealand. This professional association will empower youth workers to determine the competencies and ethics that underpin their practice, and to have input into the systems that will enable the profession to grow and develop. We fundamentally believe that youth workers should define the competencies and philosophy that sit beneath the practice of youth work in Aotearoa, rather than a minister or ministry.

International evidence tells us that having a strong national voice on professional issues affecting youth workers is a critical part of a positive youth development ecosystem, along with good policy on young people and decent resourcing to the sector.

In 2017, youth workers working with young people across Aotearoa are more qualified than ever before, but despite this, rates of pay for paid youth workers have declined against the national average wage in the last 10 years. Law changes affecting youth workers and youth development organisations have had significant impacts on youth workers. Youth workers recognise the need for a strong voice to advocate and shape the learning area of youth work and qualifications that sit alongside these.

Philosophy and Models

The philosophy, models and practice of contemporary youth work in New Zealand has been influenced and shaped by Maori practices and knowledge, Pasifika cultures, recreation and outdoor education, and more recently positive youth development models which have been hugely influential in the new millennium.

Youth work in Aotearoa is diverse – from work in schools based on academic and adventure-based learning, to support for gender and sexuality diverse young people, through recreation and culturally based programmes through to church-based programmes and services. These wide-ranging contexts create richness, and despite the broadness of the spectrum, the common ground is a consistent commitment to positive youth development and ethical practice.

Our Code of Ethics for Youth Workers is an inclusive framework which aspires to hold youth workers who work in a way that is ethical and focused on positive youth development in relationship.

Whāia te iti kahurangi ki te tūohu koe me he maunga teitei 'Aim for excellence in everything you do: if you bow your head, let it be to a lofty mountain.'

The Canterbury Youth Workers Collective (a member group of the above national association) has established registration and compliance processes and a code of ethics.

In the Solomon Islands, moves towards the establishment of the Youth Workers' Association of the Solomon Islands (YWASI) was begun in 2012 and the Association is soon to be launched. The group active in its formation has spearheaded several activities such as engaging experts to assist in drafting a code of ethical practice, initiating youth worker exchange programmes (2013–2014) and lobbying government to establish National Youth Workers Awards (2015–2016) to recognise outstanding contributions by individual and organisations in youth work – a lobby that has succeeded, with the Ministry taking this on board. The most recent is the policy consultation (2016–2017) on the review of the National Youth Policy to include youth work.

8.5 The Commonwealth Alliance of Youth Workers' Associations (CAYWA)

A commitment to establish CAYWA was made by over 10 representatives of national associations and other youth work stakeholders during the 2015 Commonwealth Conference on Youth Work. The interim committee for the association was in the process of consulting globally on the Constitution at the time of writing. Generally, it aspires to be a global professional entity, along the lines of other Commonwealth professional bodies, that represents the interests of the profession and professionals in regional and global contexts of policy and dialogue.

8.6 Conclusion

The status and progress of national professional youth worker associations is mixed. One or two associations are in advanced positions in terms of influence and guardianship of the profession, maintaining a comparatively significant stake in the development and quality assurance of practice, and in places gatekeeping influence.

Elsewhere, the development of professional associations remains at an embryonic stage, often being little more than a title and a set of intentions.

Notes

- 1 Sr.9.1: Article of PYWA.
- 2 This membership is made up predominantly of child and youth care workers and counsellors; as outlined above this vocational group might not be understood to be youth workers as defined by the Commonwealth.

- 3 <http://www.cyccanada.ca/>
- 4 <http://www.youthworkwa.org.au/site-content/Code-of-Ethics-Youth-Workers-WA.pdf>
- 5 The Youth Workers Association, and Youth Workers, Western Australia. With no National Framework for Youth Workers, the Australian Youth Affairs Coalition has provided a discussion paper regarding the ethics and values of Youth Work as a profession. See Australian Youth Affairs Coalition (2014).