

## Open youth work

Open youth work in Austria is a field of action of social work with a socio-spatial connection and a political, pedagogical and sociocultural mission. It supports and encourages young people on their way to adult independence and maturity. The accessible and voluntary access to open youth work services facilitates the acquisition of educational content that is important for day-to-day competence and social skills. Open youth work therefore makes a significant contribution to social integration and participation, particularly for educationally and socially disadvantaged young people.

Open youth work takes place in different settings. In addition to location-based open youth work in youth centres and youth clubs, mobile youth work/youth street work in public and semi-public spaces - in parks, railway stations, shopping centres and squares - is of great importance. Furthermore, Open Youth Work offers a wide range of professionally differentiated and tested services as well as innovative concepts and measures for the development of the community.

In Austria, bOJA currently comprises 350 supportive organisations of open youth work with a total of 719 location facilities. The majority of the facilities (87%) are youth centres and youth clubs, which mainly work in specific locations. 13% of the facilities are part of mobile open youth work. Of the 350 supporters of open youth work, 72% are associations, 25% municipalities and 3% denominational supporters. They are primarily funded by provinces and municipalities. The open youth work facilities in Austria employ around 2,500 youth workers, who reach an average of 250,000 young people per year with their work.

Specialists from various social pedagogical and pedagogical fields work in open youth work settings. The interdisciplinary nature and the introduction of life skills is an important success factor in open youth work.

### **Centre of Competence for Open Youth Work in Austria (bOJA)**

The Centre of Competence for Open Youth Work in Austria (bOJA) has represented the field of action of open youth work since 2009. bOJA sees itself as a centre of competence for open youth work, as a service and networking centre, as a platform for the exchange

of knowledge and information and the expert centre for quality development in open youth work.

bOJA works closely with the provinces. These province structures are represented by the 18-member bOJA board. bOJA is predominantly funded by the Federal Chancellery.

Since 2015, bOJA has been running the Extremism Information Centre, an Austria-wide contact point for extremism of all kinds and deradicalisation. The main target group of the offers are relatives and multipliers from school and social work, but also young people and young adults themselves.

Another focus is the promotion of health literacy among young people in youth work settings. For this purpose, quality criteria, a certification procedure, an Austria-wide network and a service platform were developed.

## Further information

- Centre of Competence for Open Youth Work in Austria [www.boja.at/about-boja](http://www.boja.at/about-boja)
- Open youth work in Austria. An overview. (2018, in German only)  
[www.boja.at/sites/default/files/downloads/2020-01/bOJA\\_FF\\_web2.pdf](http://www.boja.at/sites/default/files/downloads/2020-01/bOJA_FF_web2.pdf)
- Quality manual for open youth work (2021, in German only)  
[www.boja.at/sites/default/files/downloads/2022-01/Handbuch\\_mitCover.pdf](http://www.boja.at/sites/default/files/downloads/2022-01/Handbuch_mitCover.pdf)
- Extremism Information Center [www.beratungsstelleextremismus.at](http://www.beratungsstelleextremismus.at)
- **Fehler! Linkreferenz ungültig. (in German only)** [www.gesunde-jugendarbeit.at](http://www.gesunde-jugendarbeit.at)

### Imprint

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Youth Newsletter: [www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/agenda/jugend/newsletter/newsletter-anmeldung.html](http://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at/agenda/jugend/newsletter/newsletter-anmeldung.html)

The task of the Youth Competence Centre is to implement and coordinate the Austrian Youth Strategy and provide data and facts on youth policy and youth work. If you have any suggestions, please contact [jugendstrategie@bka.gv.at](mailto:jugendstrategie@bka.gv.at)