



# Youth Work and Civic Engagement: International Policy Perspectives

#YouthLinkPolicyCon





## Foreword from our CEO

YouthLink Scotland advocates for the youth work sector so that all young people can access high-quality youth work. I am proud to represent a sector that is improving the lives of young people every day.

We are keen to continue working with the government and other partners to recognise youth work and promote international friendship, learning, and collaboration. That's why this year's Policy Convention is international in flavour and focused on Youth Work and its Role in Civic Engagement. This is the fourth of its kind, following "A Right to Youth Work" in 2021, "Youthwork is Human Rights Work" in 2022, and "A Right to a Critical Education and the Role of Youth Work" in 2023.

The convention focuses on policy and influence and connects with cross-sectoral leaders. The insights gained help keep us informed and responsive to the sector's temperature on critical issues affecting them. It helps complement sector-led policy responses, informs position statements and briefings on relevant policy consultations, and builds the movement to protect, resource, and grow youth work services across Scotland.

This year, we welcome policy professionals, elected representatives, and youth workers from Scotland, Iceland, Nigeria, India, and Finland! We hope you enjoy the day as we work to maintain and grow international opportunities and relationships through our existing groupings and create new and important connections as we build the global movement.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. M. Free'.

CEO, YouthLink Scotland

# Schedule

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- 09.45 Youth work video input
- 09.50 Welcome: Kevin Kane  
Policy & Reserach Manager, YouthLink Scotland
- 10:00 Cabinet Secretary for Constitution, External Affairs and  
Culture, Angus Robertson MSP
- 10:05 Martin Whitfield, Scottish Labour MSP and Shadow  
Spokesperson for Children, Young People & Lifelong Learning  
Followed by Q&A
- 10:35 Break
- 10:45 Olalekan Oshunkoya, Executive Director of Citizen Commons  
International and Benita Ezumezu, Programme Lead for  
Citizen Commons., Nigeria
- 11:05 Together (SACR), Policy Lead, Sarah McDermott
- 11:25 Pooja Jain and Kanika Sinha  
Co-Leads, Communications and Visibility  
CoMmutiny, India
- 11:45 Break
- 12:00 Youth work video input
- 12:05 Lemmy Koivunen and Virpi Roponen, Children of the Station,  
Helsinki, Finland
- 12:35 Morgan Moore, Planet Youth Delivery Lead from Winning  
Scotland, Ellysse from YSortIt, Magga & Iryna from Planet  
Youth Iceland
- 13:10 Isla Grant MSYP and Beth MacKay MSYP  
Scottish Youth Parliament  
Q&A
- 13:30 Closing remarks  
Tim Frew, CEO, YouthLink Scotland
- 13:35 Polling and close

# Overview

## Youth work and civic engagement: International Policy Perspectives

YouthLink Scotland continues to work with our diverse membership, government and other partners to recognise youth work and promote international friendship, learning, and collaboration.

We are delighted that this year's Policy Convention is international in flavour, and focusing on Youth Work and its Role in Civic Engagement. It is the fourth of policy convention in as many years, following "A Right to Youth Work" in 2021, "Youthwork is Human Rights Work" in 2022, and "A Right to a Critical Education and the Role of Youth Work" in 2023.

### **Youth work and civic engagement**

Youth workers educate in partnership with young people about civic responsibilities, rights, and the importance of participation in democratic processes. They provide information on how government works, the significance of voting, and ways to get involved in community issues.

Practitioners equip young people with the skills needed for civic engagement, such as critical thinking, public speaking, leadership, and organisational skills. These competencies enable young individuals to effectively participate in civic life and advocate in the best interests of themselves and their communities.

Through youth work, young people create networks relationships, fostering trust, essential components of engaging with and building social capital. These networks enhance collective action, bring communities together, further promoting civic engagement and igniting causes driven by young people.

Youth workers in local authority and third sector settings often encourage young people to get involved in political processes by voting, campaigning, or facilitating representation in local and national politics.

This involvement helps to ensure that the perspectives and needs of young people are represented in political arenas.

Youth workers support young people in advocacy and activism efforts. They help them to identify issues they are passionate about, develop campaigns, and engage in activism to drive social change.

## **Learning from the policy convention**

The shared learning and insights garnered from the policy convention will help keep us informed and responsive to the sector's temperature on critical issues affecting them. It helps complement sector-led policy responses, informs position statements and briefings on relevant policy consultations, and builds the movement to protect, resource, and grow youth work services across Scotland.

This year, we welcome policy professionals, elected representatives, and youth workers from Scotland, Finland, Nigeria, India, and Finland! We hope you will join us on the day as we work to maintain and advance international opportunities and relationships through our existing groupings and create new and vital connections as we build the global movement for progressive policies with youth work at its core.

## Speakers



Kevin Kane,  
Policy and Research Manager  
YouthLink Scotland.

Angus Robertson MSP,  
Cabinet Secretary for  
Constitution, External Affairs  
and Culture.



Pooja Jain,  
Communications and Visibility  
Co-Lead, Pravah and ComMutiny  
- The Youth Collective.



**Kanika Sinha,**

Convener, ComMutiny - The Youth Collective Anchor, The vartaLeap Coalition.



**Benita Ezumezu,**

Programme lead for Citizen Commons.

**Olalekan Oshunkoya,**

Executive Director of Citizen Commons International.





Lemmy Koivunen  
Children of the Station,  
Helsinki, Finland.

Virpi Roponen  
Children of the Station,  
Helsinki, Finland.



**Martin Whitfield MSP**  
Scottish Labour Shadow  
Spokesperson for Children  
and Young People, Lifelong  
Learning and Youth  
Unemployment.





**Beth MacKay MSYP**  
Scottish Youth Parliament



**Isla Grant MSYP**  
Scottish Youth Parliament

**Sarah McDermott**,  
Development Manager,  
Together (SACR), working  
with members to support  
the implementation of the  
UNCRC





## #YouthLinkPolicyCon

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