





CURRICULUM of Youth and Social Circus Study Programme for Youth Workers (5 ECTS)

A brief description of the model of the Curriculum / Introduction to the curriculum

The CURRICULUM of Youth and Social Circus Study Programme for Youth Workers (5 ECTS) is a study programme for youth workers that offers basic skills and knowledge to be used with their students who are to be supported in transition to adulthood through the circus arts. The curriculum bases on the principles of Nordic Curriculum Theory that aims at holistic empowerment to personal growth and self-agency of the young individuals. Hence, the curriculum is student centered and leaves the teachers autonomy for interpretation of the curriculum. The role of the teacher is to be a supporter of the learning.

The extent of the curriculum is 5 credits (ECTS). 1 ECTS is 27 hours of work for the student. 5 ECTS makes hence 135 hours of workload. The first module is a theoretical introduction to the historical, socio-pedagogical background, values and target groups. The following modules are practical exercises to the circus practices that entail the use of artistic and pedagogical creativity. The learning methods and tools consist of video tutorials, independent digital work, theoretical and practical exercises, literature, and self-assessment throughout and after the course.

Short description of the youth and social circus

Youth and Social Circus Arts as Cadwell (2018) defines it, is any practice that utilizes circus arts (juggling, acrobatics, balancing, etc.) as a way of working with young people or marginalized people. Youth circus is a student-centered practice that employs circus acts as a method of engaging young people physically, mentally and creatively. Social circus can be thought of as an umbrella term for the use of circus arts in any caring, supportive or community building setting. In addition to the Youth and Social Circus field, the Youth and Social Circus teacher can work in different fields of education, early childhood, health sector, social sector and youth work. Social circus normally includes strong collaboration with other experts such as social workers, artists, health workers, teachers from formal education, or youth workers (Source: European core curriculum for youth and social circus pedagogy 180 ects, 2022,5).



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This curriculum will give preliminary skills for the 8 competencies that have been presented in the Framework of Competencies for Social Circus Trainers (Ed. [European Youth Circus and Education Network 2016](#)):

- 1) Demonstrate a good command of the art and science in teaching circus: Modules 1, 2 and 3.
- 2) Create and maintain a safe physical and emotional learning environment Modules 2, 3 and 4.
- 3) Develop pedagogical tools and practices in accordance with the learning objectives and adapt them to the needs of the situation Modules 2 and 4.
- 4) Support the personal and social development of the participant Modules 1 - 5.
- 5) Conduct research relevant to the field of youth and social circus pedagogy, Module 1.
- 6) Evaluate professional practice, Modules 1 - 5.
- 7) Communicate with a range of audiences using the appropriate tools Modules 3 and 4.
- 8) Manage pedagogical projects of youth and social circus, Module 4.

THE CURRICULUM

Target group

Youth workers (with at least a vocational education)

Course aim

On completion of the course the students are expected to:

- Know the research based historical background and theoretical principles, values and the target groups of the youth and social circus.
- Use pedagogically and safely some circus techniques and create minor circus projects with their clients in the youth work.
- Critically reflect on the potential outcomes of a Youth and Social Circus project and make suggestions for development
- Independently self-assess to develop further their own professional skills and competencies in the youth and social circus.



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Workload

1 ECTS is 27 hours of work for the student. 5 ECTS is 135 hours. It entails watching tutorials, independent digital work, theoretical and practical exercises, literature, and self-assessment throughout and after the course.

MODULES:

1. INTRODUCTION TO YOUTH AND SOCIAL CIRCUS ARTS (0,5 ECTS)

PRESENTATION OF THE MODULE:

The aim of this module is to familiarize students with the background of Youth and Social Circus. Students will be introduced to the spectrum of target groups of Youth and Social Circus. Emphasis will be placed on the historical and pedagogical context and the development of these approaches. The theories will be based on the relationship of specific methods of Youth and Social Circus to general educational goals. Through the analysis of examples of best practices, students will learn about the values, key issues and approaches of Social and Youth Circus.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:

The Student

- Has basic knowledge of the historical context of the development of the Youth and Social Circus
- Identifies basic practices and pedagogical tools of Youth and Social Circus
- Identifies the values and the main goals of Youth and Social Circus
- Has basic knowledge of different case studies of Youth and Social Circus
- Understands the role of the youth workers and the limits of their responsibility and is able to collaborate with appropriate experts

COURSE CONTENT:

The Student

- Explores the historical contexts of the development of the Youth and Social Circus
- Studies concept, values, and the main goals of Youth and Social Circus –
- Examines different case studies of Youth and Social Circus
- Critically reflects upon pedagogical tools and practices of the field –



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STUDY METHODS

- Video tutorials and other digital learning
- Reading written materials
- Self-assessment or group assessment

LITERATURE (to be added later)

2. EDUCATIONAL SETTINGS IN YOUTH AND SOCIAL CIRCUS (0,5 ECTS)

MODULE INTRODUCTION:

The module provides orientation on how learning is affected by social, cognitive, emotional and physical environments. It gives students tools to ensure emotional safety in the Youth and Social Circus practice and knowledge about their duty of care. It also introduces the students to work with various groups. The roles of relevant collaborators as well as of Youth and Social Circus trainers are clarified. The concept of a youth worker and student relationship and well-being in a new learning environment will be introduced.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Student is able to

- Understand human cognitive, emotional and social development in relation to movement and especially in circus training
- Create a safe emotional environment for the basic circus practices for different target groups
- Understand the role of the youth workers and the limits of their responsibility and collaborates with appropriate experts
- Understand the concept of teacher/youth worker and student well-being



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COURSE CONTENT:

The Student

- Explores human cognitive, emotional and social development in relation to movement and circus training
- Studies how to create a safe emotional environment for the circus practice for different target groups
- Explores the duty of care, the role of the social worker/trainer and the limits of their responsibility
- Studies aspects of well-being in training situations: It may include also to find the right relation and role with the clients in the circus program, that fits the social worker, and that it helps creating a motivating, safe and fun learning environment. Student centered education is the key.. Collaborates with experts in mental health, emotional well-being, therapists, and social circus trainers/schools

STUDY METHODS

- Games
- Lectures in the video tutorials and digital learning
- Practical training
- Group work, practical networking with other professionals
- Video analysis
- Reading written materials
- Practical tasks for collaborating with other professionals working with the young
- Self-assessment after the module

LITERATURE (to be added later)

3. CIRCUS TECHNIQUES AND HUMAN BODY (2 ECTS)

This module will be divided into four (4) parts: **Physiology, Warm-Up & Methods of Preparation, Techniques & Tutorials, and Performance.** Each part will connect the human body to basic practices which will support the transition of young individuals into adulthood. The module will include low threshold circus techniques for youth workers, in which the safety measures are not too high, as well as expand upon standardized trust-based training practices (i.e. Challenge Course, Ropes Course, etc.) which aim to build confidence and team-based trust among youth.



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COURSE INTRODUCTION

The focus of this course is understanding the basics of how the human body works in relation to circus practice. The course includes the practice of different circus techniques as well as orientation to the functioning of the human body in action to aid in injury prevention and recovery.

PART 1 – PHYSIOLOGY

The course offers basic knowledge about human anatomy and physiology. The holistic approach to learning enables students with different starting points to develop their body awareness (and consciousness) in practicing and teaching circus.

PART 2 – WARM-UP & METHODS OF PREPARATION

This section will introduce physical and emotional ‘warm-up’ techniques to be included in circus or daily practice. The course will also demonstrate trust & team building exercises in the form of challenge courses, such as a Ropes Course, which is an “outdoor personal development and team building activity... [Usually consisting of] high and/or low elements. Low elements take place on the ground or above the ground. High elements are usually constructed in trees or made of utility poles and require a belay for safety.” ([Wikipedia](#)) These preliminary or rudimentary trust-based courses may serve as a precursor for young people into social circus training.

PART 3 – CIRCUS TECHNIQUES & TUTORIALS

1. Juggling
2. Partner Acrobatics
3. Tightrope
4. Unicycle
5. Rola Bola Balancing Board
6. Diabolo
7. Poi
8. Chinese Plate
9. Hula Hoop
10. Balloon Modelling

PART 4 – PERFORMANCE

This course will contribute to the understanding of the performing nature of circus arts and how to present circus techniques in front of a smaller audience in youth work.



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COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:

The Student

- Understands the basics of how the human body works (**Part 1**)
- Is able to use different injury prevention and various recovery methods in circus practice (**Part 1**)
- Knows how to prepare mentally & emotionally for social circus training (**Part 2**)
- Is able to use different warm-up methods and prepare the body for circus arts (**Part 2**)
- Has the capacity to develop trust & confidence in themselves and in their partner(s) (**Part 2**)
- Has basic knowledge of specific circus disciplines and techniques (**Part 3**)
- Knows how to apply circus skills/discipline in everyday life and/or performance (**Part 4**)

ADDITIONAL COURSE CONTENT:

The Student

- Studies human functional anatomy and physiology essential to circus training
- Practises the basics of different circus disciplines and techniques
- Makes small circus performances by using different circus disciplines
- Practises standard strength and warm-up exercises with respect to anatomy and physiology
- Practises different injury prevention and recovery methods

STUDY METHODS

- Lectures via digital learning and video tutorials
- Practical training
- Video analysis
- Reading of articles and other written materials
- Self-assessment after the module

LITERATURE (to be added later)



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4. DIDACTICS AND CREATIVITY (2 ECTS)

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

In this module students learn to teach basic circus disciplines and how to apply creativity in teaching and how to support artistic creativity in students. The aim is that the student will understand the importance of planning, safety and evaluation of circus arts in the youth worker's profession. During the course the student will be introduced to different group work and group management methods which promote a safe emotional, physical and social learning environment with various creative ways.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES:

The Student is able to

- Teach basics of different circus disciplines in a safe learning environment
- Learn shortly about the different target groups/clients and how they can benefit in the context of Social Circus and fit in together with social and youth circus in the best way.
- Emphasis is on inclusivity
- Plan, prepare and evaluate circus class/ workshop in a safe emotional, physical and social environment
- Manage a group and adapt teaching in different learning situations
- Use creative approaches in teaching and foster self-expression and creativity in learning

COURSE CONTENT:

The Student

- Learns basic pedagogical methods of different basic circus disciplines
- Creates a safe emotional environment for the basic circus practices for different target groups
- Plans, prepares and evaluates circus class/ workshop
- Learns different methods of group work
- Explores the importance of creativity in the educational process in the context of Youth and Social Circus
- Reflects critically short supervised teaching practices
- Observes teaching in a youth and circus school in practice
- Reflects didactics in relation to inclusion and accessibility



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STUDY METHODS:

- Literature and video tutorials
- Practical training
- Observation- visiting a social circus class and making reflective notes
- Video analysis and digital learning
- Independent work

LITERATURE (to be added later)

ASSESSMENT

Self-assessment with open badges scales 1-5 = weak to full professional

Scale	Rating
5 points	Excellent, full professional.
4 points	Very Good., but could do a bit better
3 points	Good, but much more to do
2 points	Satisfactory
1 point	Weak, Less than acceptable



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