



Youthpass

Making the most of your learning



Youthpass Guide



Education and Culture
Youth in Action

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Foreword

foreword

Youthpass was developed to improve the recognition and validation of non-formal learning in the Youth in Action programme. The decision to do so was based on a clear need for participants and organisers to affirm their participation and to reflect on the learning outcomes of the programme.

Open to ALL young people irrespective of their social, educational or cultural background, the Youth in Action programme provides hundreds of thousands of young people with the unique opportunity to explore and experience the meaning of inclusion and respect for diversity in a concrete way.

It is also a chance to develop new skills and competences in non-formal and informal settings. By providing an additional source of learning, the Programme's activities are particularly relevant to young people with fewer opportunities.

For the first time in the European Union, Youthpass provides an instrument that truly recognises what young people gain from their active participation in the Youth in Action Programme.

Already in the White Paper 'A new impetus for European Youth' the innovative impact of youth work was described as part of the overall package of Lifelong Learning measures which demands greater recognition as well as greater complementarities with formal education and training.

In May 2006 the Youth Ministers of the European Union highlighted that the Youth in Action Programme makes an important contribution towards gaining competences.

Youth exchange programmes, for instance, foster ability in communication in the mother tongue as well as in a foreign language. Participation in activities in the youth field in general support the development of social, intercultural and civic competences. So it is only natural that the development of Youthpass was based on the Key competences for Lifelong Learning that were adopted by the European Parliament and the Council in December 2006.

Youthpass will support young people to make best use of the experiences they have had during their participation in the Programme. In the coming months every participant of a Youth Exchange, Voluntary Service or a Training Course in the Youth in Action Programme will have the opportunity to obtain a Youthpass. Other Actions of the Programme will be covered soon.

Therefore it is with great pleasure that today we can present this manual on Youthpass. It serves both as a helpful resource for everyone working with young people and responsible for issuing Youthpass, and at the same time, as a background to understanding the importance of better recognition of non-formal learning in order to improve social inclusion and employability.

Let me kindly invite you to discover what can be learnt and experienced from our Programme and how we wish to make it more visible and useful for young people.

Happy reading!

◆ Pierre Mairesse

*Director for Youth, Sport and Relations with the Citizen
Directorate-General for Education and Culture
European Commission*

Introduction

Youthpass is here!

✦ Rita Bergstein and Mark Taylor

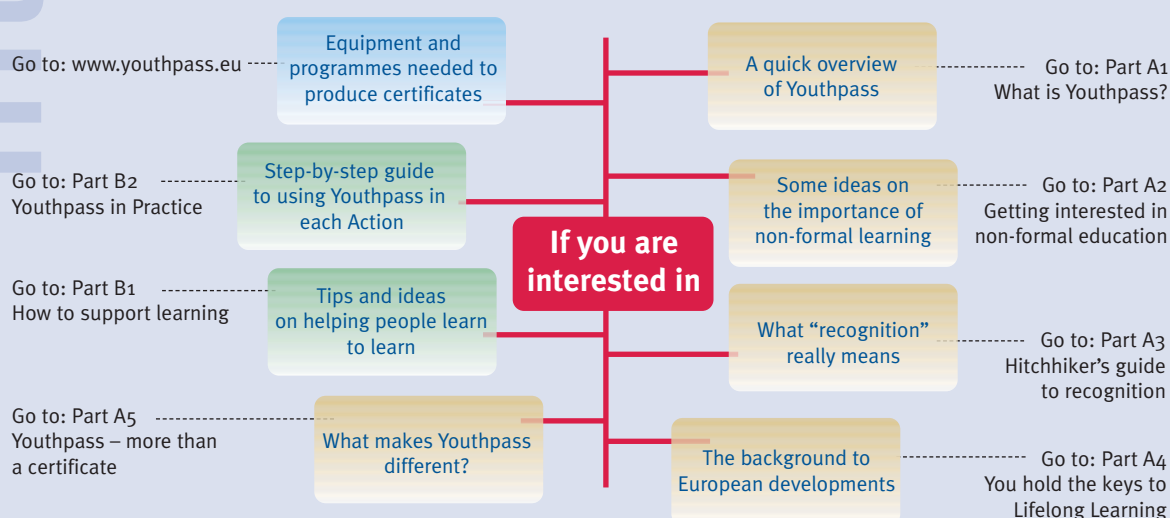
What you are reading now is the result of two years' work and engagement by a wide range of people to prepare for the implementation of Youthpass. Test phases have been run in thirteen countries across Europe, involving hundreds of young people, together with youth workers, trainers, representatives of youth organisations, national authorities, employers and other stakeholders.

This publication is here to help you

- > understand the background to the development of Youthpass
- > think about learning and help others to check their learning
- > use Youthpass for different activities in the Youth in Action Programme
- > connect to and use the technical tools available on the internet to produce Youthpass certificates
- > orientate yourself towards finding out more about background topics such as the political context and learning in theory and practice.

Everyone will start using this publication at the part they need. Part A could be described as the "minds on" section, (things to think about), looking at the background to Youthpass and outlining the main ideas and concepts. Part B form the "hands on" section, looking at how Youthpass is to be used and describing what is needed to put it into practice.

So:



Many thanks to all those who have contributed in many different ways to helping make this all a reality!



A1

What is Youthpass?

✦ Rita Bergstein and Mark Taylor

Youthpass is a new way for participants in the Youth in Action Programme to describe what they have done and to show what they have learnt. (Up until now the only people to have standardised proof of this through a certificate were participants in European Voluntary Service). Starting with Youth Exchanges, EVS and Training Courses, every participant will have the opportunity to get their Youthpass and other Actions will be added as time goes on.

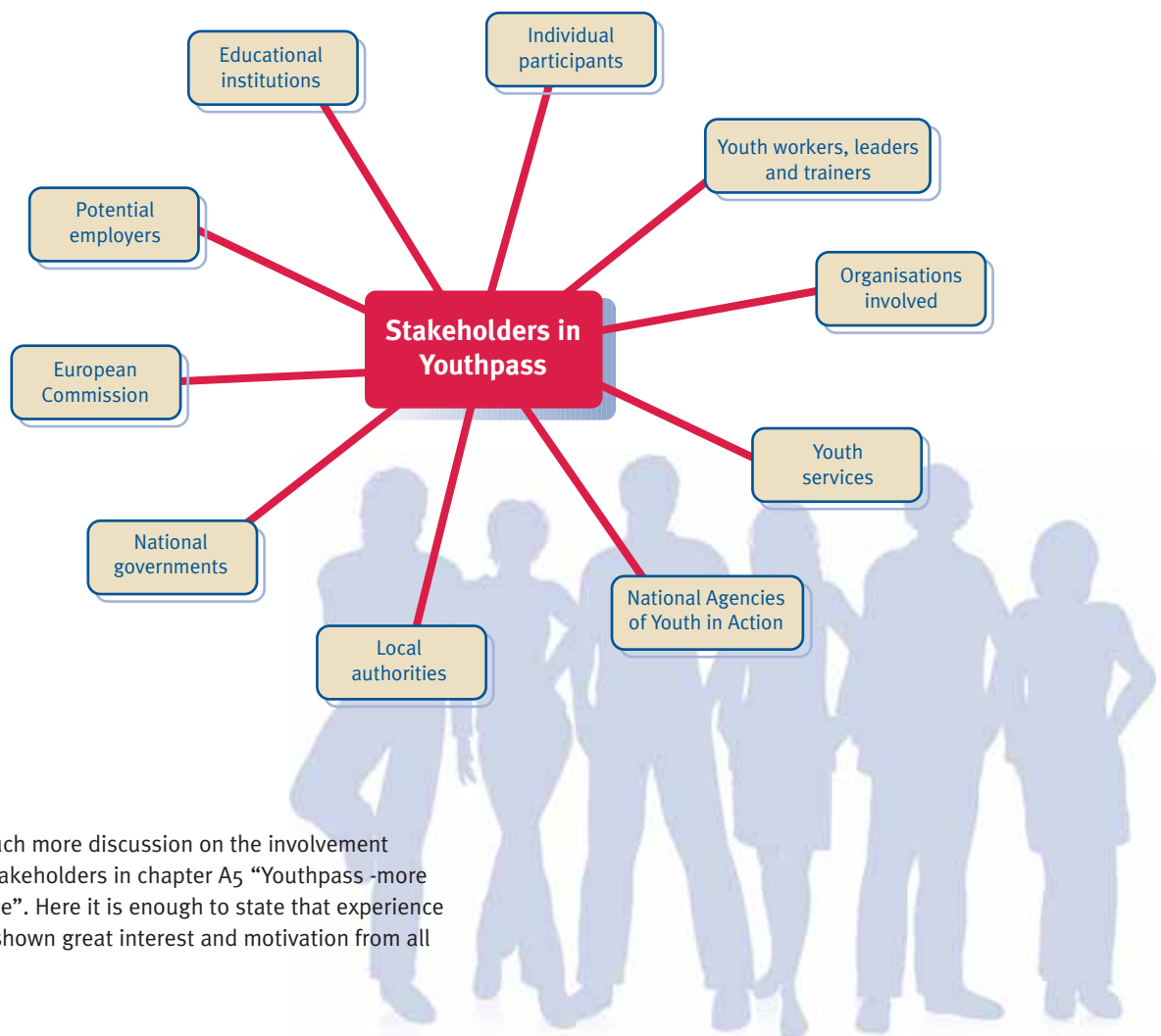
We shall go into much more detail in this publication about how Youthpass can be used and the different steps needed to make the most of the opportunities involved – here we just want to give an outline of the basics. And this includes also making sure that there is no confusion about what Youthpass is NOT!

Youthpass IS 	Youthpass IS NOT 
a confirmation of participation by the organisers of a specific activity	something which gives any rights to the holder
a description of the activity (at the moment this includes participation in Exchanges, Voluntary Service, or Training Course – other Actions will be introduced later)	a formal accreditation of competences
an individualised description of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - activities undertaken - learning outcomes 	a replacement for any formal qualifications
a certificate for people participating in Youth in Action Programme activities	available to demonstrate learning outcomes from activities undertaken in the YOUTH programme (which came to an end in 2006)
a tool which puts the Key competences for Lifelong Learning into practice	
firmly based on principles of non-formal education and learning	
supported by the Youth in Action Programme of the European Commission	
a way of improving visibility of learning in the Youth in Action Programme	
an explanation of Youth in Action Programme activities which can be understood by people outside the youth	

A1. What is Youthpass?

What all this is based on, how participants look at themselves and their learning and how they can be supported and use the experience are things we will see in the following chapters!

Raising awareness of Youthpass and its implementation will be a huge task and we will need the cooperation and support of a whole range of potentially interested people and organisations, such as:



You will find much more discussion on the involvement of Youthpass stakeholders in chapter A5 “Youthpass -more than a certificate”. Here it is enough to state that experience up to now has shown great interest and motivation from all sectors.

A2

Getting interested in non-formal education and learning

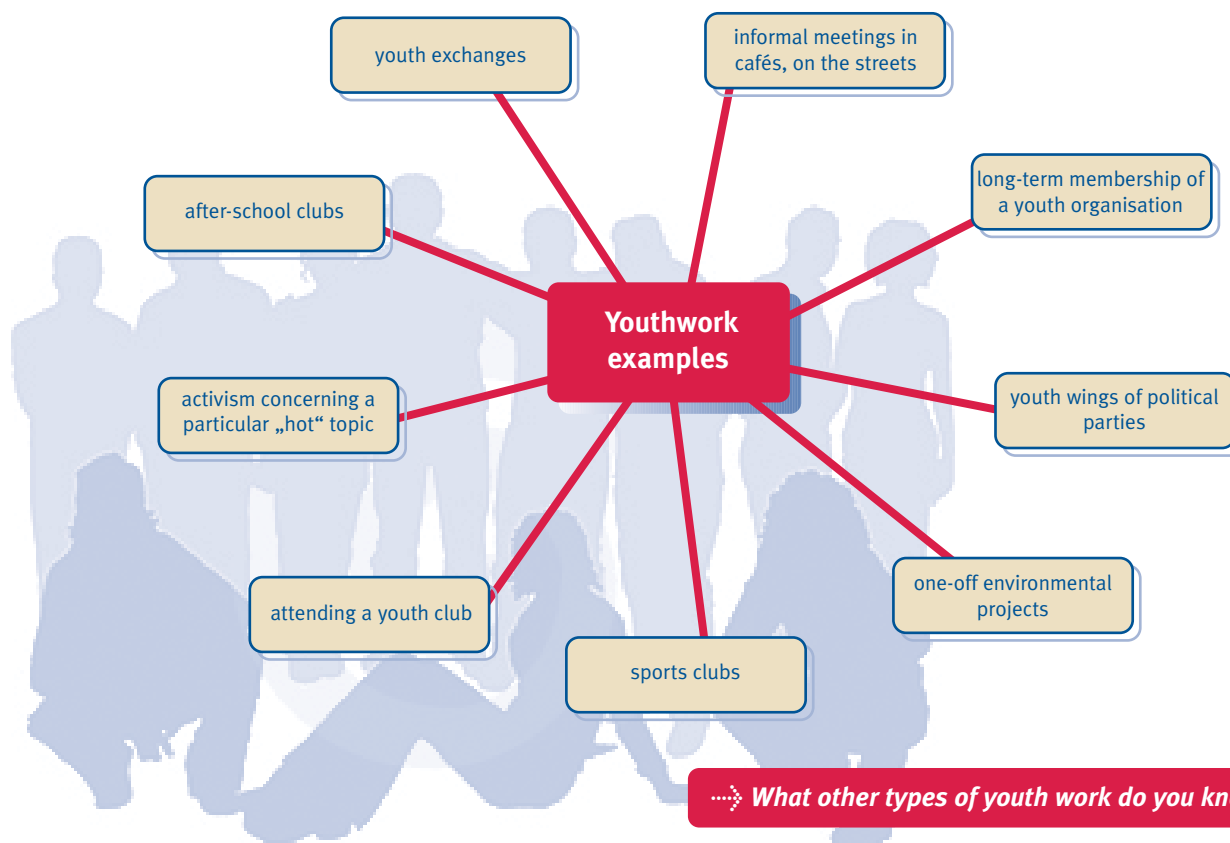
✦ Mark Taylor

In this publication and in lots of other places associated with the Youth in Action Programme, you will find references to learning and, especially, to non-formal education and learning. Why is this? What is the point? This chapter tries to go into some of the reasons and to show why we should even bother to start getting interested in all this stuff. See what you think!

What place does youth work have in education and learning?

Those who are involved in youth work have known for a long time that young people gain a lot from it (and not all of that is concerned with grand educational aims!). But it is also true that people outside the youth work field often give it a

low priority, do not always know what young people gain, nor do they have an understanding of what youth work can contribute more generally to society. Youth work itself is difficult to put into one “box”: if you look at the situation in different countries, youth work may be supported by education ministries, youth work ministries or even leisure/tourism ministries. Practitioners may be paid or voluntary and they may have learnt mainly through experience or through a formal educational qualification programme. For some, youth work is mainly about encouraging the active involvement of young people in society; for others it is an open space for learning; and some see it as a form of social control. This is not very surprising because youth work can be found in a wide variety of contexts. Here are some examples:



➡ What other types of youth work do you know?

A2. Getting interested in non-formal education and learning

Disputes about the concepts of education and learning are as old as Socrates and it would take far more space than we have available to go into all the definitions, links and views about this. The publications and websites listed at the end of this chapter can help you go deeper into the subjects. (And when this chapter is translated into other languages, we will find more exciting challenges, for example, in trying to see where the German concepts of “Erziehung” and “Bildung” fit into the arguments!).

Along with others – like the European Youth Forum – we have found it useful for the sake of clarity to differentiate between:

Education as a system and Learning as a process

So, non-formal education can be seen as a system outside formal education which brings together resources, people, objectives, tools and methods to produce a structured learning process.

These thoughts naturally throw up a lot of questions about how the different types of learning are linked together *and* how to distinguish between formal, non-formal and informal elements. Without wanting to be too simplistic, the current consensus (see the “Pathways to Validation” reference at the end of the chapter) seems to be that:

- > *informal learning happens nearly all the time in daily life (at home, on the street, in cafés, etc) but it is not a planned activity;*
- > *non-formal learning is voluntary, is assisted by others and is planned;*
- > *formal learning is structured, regulated from the outside and involves some form of certification*

Nowadays, we refer to informal and non-formal learning as providing the framework for the educational approaches seen in youth work. Everything depends on the context within which we use such terms. Many now like to see the different forms of learning in a kind of spectrum.

Researcher Helen Colley and her colleagues (see the references at the end of this chapter) put forward the idea that it is virtually impossible to find any educational activity which is only formal or only informal – most contain a

mixture of elements from both. If we try to imagine where to place youth work here, it is possible to see it on the spectrum as a mixture of non-formal and informal elements:

formal (non-formal) informal

➔ **Where would you place your youth work experience?**

If we follow the principles of Lifelong Learning, then youth work provides complementary learning opportunities to formal education and has a contribution to make that should be recognised – both for the individuals concerned and for the field itself.

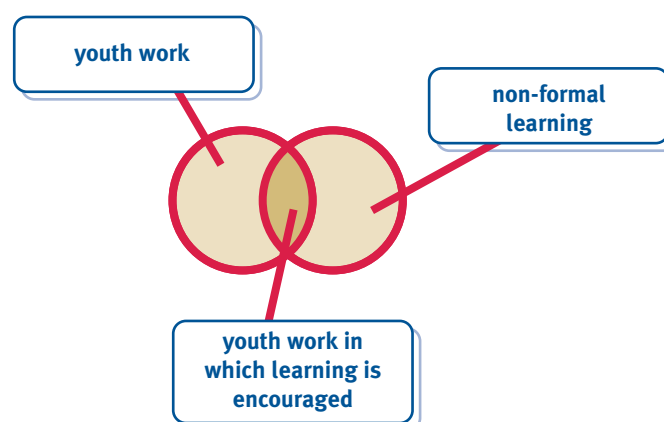
For more details about recognition of non-formal learning and European developments, have a look at the two following chapters:

A3: “Hitchhiker’s guide to recognition in the youth field

A4: “You hold the keys to Lifelong Learning”

So what do we get out of non-formal learning?

Before we go any further, we need to be clear that youth work does not equal non-formal learning, or vice versa! So, maybe it’s more interesting to see both as overlapping circles:



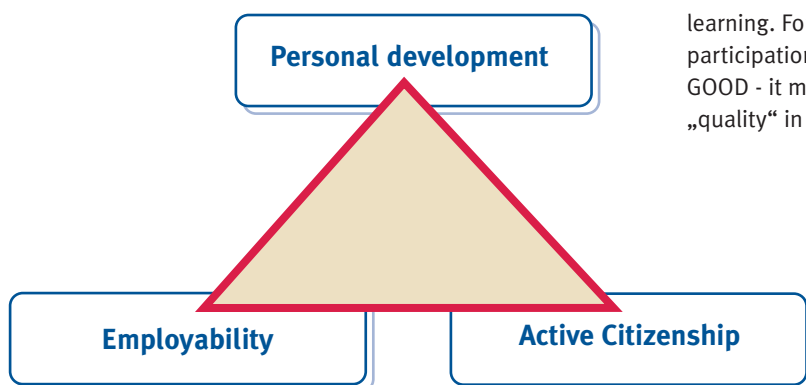
A2. Getting interested in non-formal education and learning

Non-formal learning takes place in many contexts, such as training on the job in a factory. But youth work is not only about learning, it can also be about getting involved or the pure joy of being together having fun! Within youth work we can plan our learning, AND we are also lucky enough to be able to take advantage of things which happen unexpectedly – use our flexibility and direct contact with the “here and now”.

What do you think young people learn through participating in youth work?

One of the great challenges we face at the moment is to make the learning that undoubtedly occurs in youth work more explicit. The learning that takes place within youth work is often invisible, both to those within and outside the field. And if we call it “non-formal” or even “informal” learning, then there is a danger that people will think it is inferior to anything produced within the formal education system as it doesn’t usually result in formal qualifications based on exams. Yet in the context of an individual’s life, what he or she has learnt by taking part in youth activities may have just as big an impact (or bigger) on the quality of their lives. Have a look at the chapter B1 “How to support learning” for tips and ideas on planning and making learning more visible within the Youth in Action Programme.

Over the past few years, we have seen a growing realisation that non-formal learning makes a major contribution to young peoples’ lives within three main interlinked areas:



At each point of the triangle we can think of many learning themes which can be made more visible than they have been in the past. Some inter-linked examples are provided here:

For **personal development**: looking at how I am growing up; what do I want to be and do? how do I live and cooperate with others? how do I learn? gaining insight into my strengths and weaknesses...

For **active citizenship**: how does my youth work participation link with the wider society? what initiatives do I take to include others in what we do? to what extent do I put into practice that slogan about “thinking globally, acting locally”? how do we act democratically? where do human rights need to be protected? how can I make a difference?...

For **employability**: what “soft skills” do I need to be effective in teamwork? how do I take the initiative? what are my “hard skills” in relation to project management (budgeting, planning, risk assessment, etc)? how can I describe what and who I am to others?...

What else would you put under the triangle headings if you were looking at activities within the Youth in Action Programme?

How do we know if our non-formal learning is any good?

Of course, the mere fact that you have participated in a Youth in Action Programme activity is in itself no proof of learning. For learning to happen, the activity (and your participation) must be CONDUCIVE to learning. It must be GOOD - it must be of high QUALITY. But what exactly is „quality“ in non-formal learning? Peter Lauritzen – head of

A2. Getting interested in non-formal education and learning

the youth section in the Council of Europe's Directorate of Youth and Sport – gave a powerful answer in an interview with the Serbian NGO Hajde da [which we summarise here in bullet points] outlining what to consider when assessing whether a given non-formal learning project is of high quality:

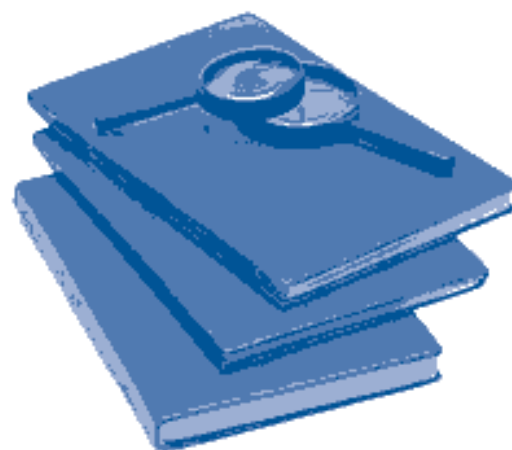
- > *clarity of aims and objectives*
- > *appropriate material learning conditions*
- > *trained staff (voluntary or professional)*
- > *learner-centredness*
- > *solution-focused*
- > *variety of methods used*
- > *good balance between individual and group learning*
- > *appropriate amount of time allocated to learning, relaxation and private time*
- > *room for intercultural relations and reflection of their influence on the learning process*
- > *good knowledge of previous learning histories and good information on intended use of the learning*
- > *reasonable balance between cognitive and skills training attraction of and in the learning process*
- > *self-reflection*
- > *assessment of progress and difficulties*
- > *self assessment*
- > *group evaluation.*

➡ **What would you add to or change from this list when you look at your own practice?**

And Peter goes on to say that “quality standards [for non-formal learning] should grow out of a process of development and gradual agreement between public authorities and learning providers in co-operation with the research community. This should lead to an agreed assessment system, the training of assessors and the implementation of an efficient and transparent system”.

One of the most recent examples of such a process happening has been the development of the *European Portfolio for Youth Workers and Youth Leaders* (see the reference at the end of this chapter). A whole range of stakeholders were brought together to devise a framework for practitioners to look at themselves and their youth work within a context of non-formal learning. It is important to note that the Portfolio is only one step towards defining quality standards in youth work in Europe – we shall have to see over the next few years how the youth work community makes use of it.

We have quite a long way to go before quality standards in non-formal learning are fully agreed – and the whole Youthpass process will serve as a useful map for us to follow and to learn from as we go!



A2. Getting interested in non-formal education and learning

References and further information

There are an increasing number of publications, papers and reports on these vital issues – the website which also hosts the Youthpass will contain many of them. Here are some starting points:

Non-formal education and learning - background

The theme of the June 2006 issue of *Coyote* magazine (published by the Partnership between the Council of Europe and the European Commission) is non-formal learning and education from the perspectives of the relevant European institutions, youth organisations and practitioners.

<http://www.youth-partnership.net/youth-partnership/publications/Coyote/11/Index>

[Accessed 15 September 2008]

Explore the history of and current developments in informal and non-formal education on the informal education homepage:

<http://www.infed.org/>

Two good examples of the thinking available here are Alan Rodger's article on a new paradigm for non-formal and informal education:

http://www.infed.org/biblio/non_formal_paradigm.htm

and the piece by Helen Colley, Phil Hodgkinson & Janice Malcolm on the relationships between informal, non-formal and formal learning:

http://www.infed.org/archives/e-texts/colley_informal_learning.htm

[Accessed 15 September 2008]

The UNESCO Task Force on Education for the 21st Century, including the Delors report:

<http://www.unesco.org/delors/>

[Accessed 15 September 2008]

A very useful internet forum on the Identification and Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning for practitioners and academics is provided by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop):

<http://communities.trainingvillage.gr/hfl>

[Accessed 15 September 2008]

European Union

A broad introduction to the contribution of education and training to the Lisbon strategy:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/index_en.html

[Accessed 15 September 2008]

Resolution on the Recognition of the value of non-formal and informal learning within the European youth field decided by the EU Council of Ministers:

<http://europa.eu/scadplus/leg/en/cha/c11096.htm>

or

<http://tinyurl.com/m7ske>

[Accessed 15 September 2008]

A2. Getting interested in non-formal education and learning

links

The Bridges for Recognition conference report is full of examples from around Europe of initiatives on giving recognition to different forms of youth work.

<http://www.salto-youth.net/bridgesforrecognition/>

[Accessed 15 September 2008]

Council of Europe

Youth Directorate of the Council of Europe:

www.coe.int/youth

This is also where you will find the European Portfolio for Youth Workers and Youth Leaders freely available for download:

www.coe.int/youthportfolio

[Accessed 15 September 2008]

Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers on the promotion and recognition of non-formal education/learning of young people

<http://tinyurl.com/z52r7>

[Accessed 15 September 2008]

European Youth Forum

Position papers of the European Youth Forum on the role of youth organisations as providers of non-formal education/learning can be found here:

http://www.youthforum.org/en/policy_papers.htm

[Accessed 15 September 2008]



A3

Hitchhiker's guide to recognition of non-formal learning in the youth field

✦ Darko Markovic

*"What do I get?
Oh, what do I get?"
Buzzcocks*

At the moment many formal, non-formal and informal discussions are taking place on how to get better recognition for learning in the youth field. Some people think there are already enough opportunities to gain recognition, others have strong concerns about "formalising the non-formal", others still argue it is a waste of resources, while some believe it is just the right moment to work on the development of new recognition strategies. Obviously, for many different reasons, the issue of recognition touches the very heart of youth work and non-formal education, leaving barely anyone participating in those discussions totally indifferent¹.

Following these "hot discussions", it seems that some of the main questions related to recognition are: How can we bring the institutional policy objectives and the realities of youth work in Europe closer? What are the main challenges and the "stretch zones" for us, youth workers/leaders, mentors and trainers, in this process? What are the potential dangers and pitfalls for youth work and non-formal education? And what might be the potential benefits for the young people we work with?

Already knowing that the definitive answer is "42"², this chapter still dares to address the above questions, while offering a brief guide for reflection and answers to some major dilemmas related to recognition for learning in the youth field. So, fasten your seat belts...

Current policy situation at European level

In May 2006 the Council of the European Union adopted a *Resolution on the recognition of the value of non-formal and informal learning within the European youth field*. In this resolution the Council states that "the work and achievements of young people and those active in youth

work and youth organisations deserve greater recognition in order to enhance their value and visibility, and should be given due consideration by employers, formal education and civil society in general".³ The Council also invites Member States and the European Commission to get involved in the development of youth-specific recognition tools "for identifying and recognising the skills and competences acquired by young people through non-formal and informal learning"⁴. Although you might find this official call from the "high level" surprising, this is just a part of the same "wave" in re-thinking learning and education in Europe, which started in Lisbon in 2000⁵.

Following this direction, over the past 6-7 years, various "milestones"⁶ have been set and different "pathways"⁷ explored on the way towards better recognition of the learning that takes place in the youth sector. Still the question remains: how can we create more of a link between the policy and practice of recognition?

The confusing word "recognition"

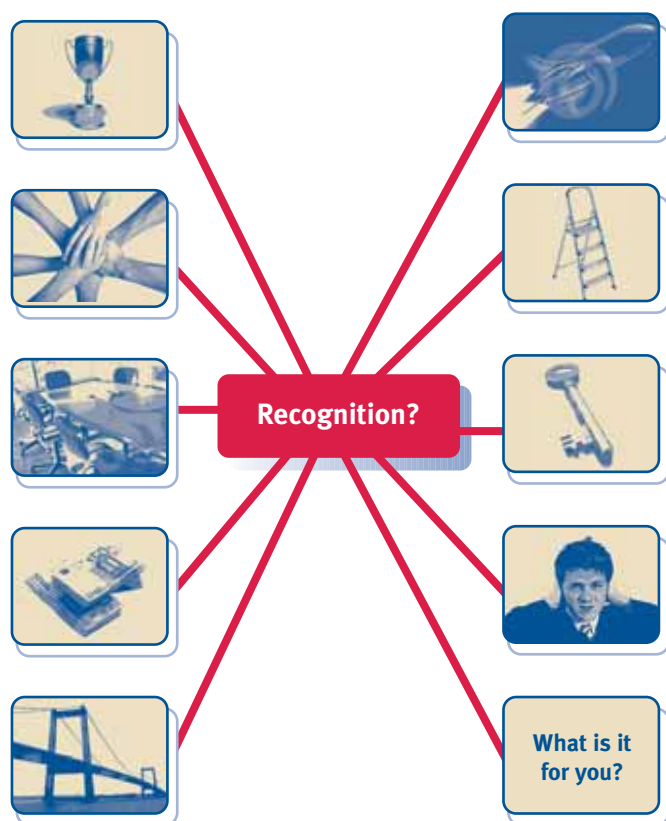
From my own personal experience of working with recognition⁸, I can tell you that the use of the word itself can cause quite some confusion. First of all, there are some difficulties in translating the English term into other languages, without losing the original meaning.

➡ **How do you say "recognition" in your language?**

Secondly, the word "recognition" conjures up a whole range of different associations: some people think of accreditation, others of certificates or even diplomas, while the rest might think of giving more value to something. And they are all right, but they just think about *different recognition mechanisms and procedures*⁹. And if we approach it from a more metaphoric way of thinking, what would your image of "recognition in the youth field" be?

A3. Hitchhiker's guide to recognition of non-formal learning in the youth field

...> Do any of these images represent recognition in the youth field for you? Which one(s) and why?



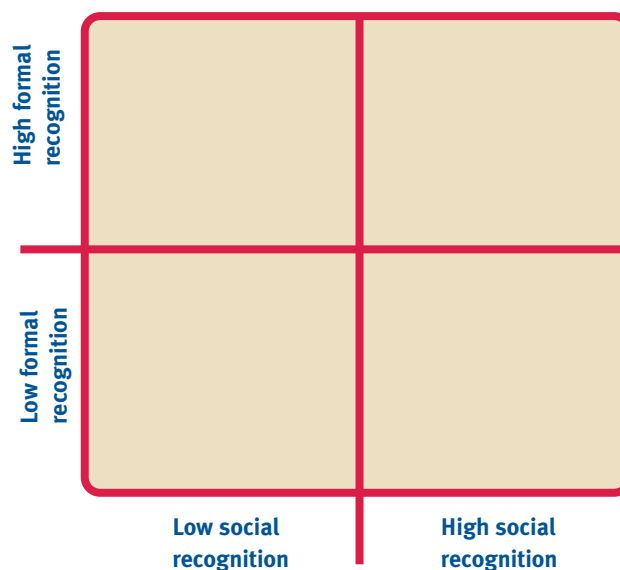
The third problem with understanding recognition is related to the potential *objects of recognition*. In the youth field context, one can think of better recognition of the youth sector as a whole, the youth worker profession, youth trainer competences, educational programmes, providers, participation, qualifications and - last but not the least - the object of recognition can be the *young people's learning, both process and outcomes, in youth activities*. When thinking about recognition, the last is probably the least controversial and it is the main focus of the Youthpass and this publication.

Finally, what creates major confusion about recognition is usually the mixing up of two interrelated, but still distinct, processes – *formal recognition* and *social recognition*¹⁰. Formal recognition (sometimes also called “codified”) of learning is about giving a formal value and formal status to new competences acquired by participation in an

educational youth activity (e.g. youth exchange, EVS, training etc.), involving mechanisms like certification. On the other hand, social recognition is more about giving and recognising a social value in learning *per se*, as well as a positive attitude from and appreciation of the community towards activities in the youth sector.

The same type of logic can be applied when thinking about the status of the youth sector and non-formal education in your country and other countries in Europe. Due to different social, educational or political factors, there are large national differences related to recognition of youth work and non-formal education. For example, in some countries you can find a formally recognised profession of youth worker/trainer, while at the same time there is relatively low social recognition for this kind of work. In other countries there might be significant financial support for and social appreciation of youth work activities, but no formal recognition at all.

...> If you take these two dimensions of recognition, where would you place the status of youth work and non-formal education in your country?



A3. Hitchhiker's guide to recognition of non-formal learning in the youth field

Understanding your own youth work

Another challenge related to putting recognition of learning in youth activities into practice concerns the very understanding of youth work, its core purposes and practices.

→ *When thinking about the reasons and the nature of activities that you carry out with young people, would you consider them primarily as leisure time activities, or education and learning or social activism or a combination of those three?*

<input type="radio"/>	Leisure time and fun	10
<input type="radio"/>	Learning and education	10
<input type="radio"/>	Social activism	10

The way you see the main purpose and the way you approach youth work might significantly affect your perception of and attitude towards calls for more and better recognition of learning in the youth sector.

“Attractive youth work”

Two years ago, I had an opportunity to work as a trainer for the International Young Nature Friends (IYNF), an organisation which took the very courageous step of reconsidering its core purpose, after many decades of existence. Driven by the significant decrease in interest by young people in their activities, they started to “dig” deeply into the very nature of the youth work they were doing (as well as the very nature of the function of their organisation). And they came out with a very interesting concept of “attractive youth work”¹¹. It might look to some people like a simple marketing trick, but essentially it was a very well thought-out concept which gave their outdoor youth activities a clearer and intentional (non-formal) educational dimension and ensured this was clearly communicated to the young people who were interested in taking part. The good old hikes in the forest or mountain climbing activities were not to be seen merely as an opportunity to get along with other young people and be in contact with nature, but also as consciously planned, value-based, non-formal education opportunities to learn about team work, diversity,

sustainable development, environmental protection etc.¹². People from IYNF were convinced that these kinds of activities would be more attractive to today's young people! What do you think?

Recognition of learning - a way to make youth activities even more attractive?

When I look back and think about my own learning in youth work and non-formal education, I realise that's precisely the place where I learnt some of the most important things in my life, for example: what taking initiative *really* means, how to communicate effectively, how to understand cultural differences and how they affect communication, how to work in a team, how to lead a project, how to stand up for my rights in a constructive manner and many more¹³.

→ *What were the main things you learnt in youthwork in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes?*

As youth leaders, mentors or trainers in youth activities, we should be proud and not too modest about the importance of learning for the young people we work with. There is, indeed, so much precious learning taking place in youth activities all over Europe. Still the question remains: can we offer more to the young people we work with? Can we offer more than personal satisfaction and self-confidence and an experience which is usually very difficult to explain to those outside the youth field?

To be clear, the things we learn or teach in youth work are so vitally important and universally needed, but still we sometimes lack a “translation system” to communicate these learning outcomes to other sectors and “stakeholders” (families, schools, potential employers, etc.). And if there were a recognition system that could provide a common language (a translation tool) for learning, understandable both within and outside the youth (and civil society) field, would it then be an important added value to our youth exchanges, training, EVS? This is the moment where the need for the development of a youth-friendly recognition tool is clearly identified!

→ *To what extent do you think that the existence of such a tool would make our youth work even more attractive for young people and more understandable to people outside the youth field?*

A3. Hitchhiker's guide to recognition of non-formal learning in the youth field

Why do we need recognition - is employability the main driving force?

Apart from the political ideal of making “Europe a knowledge-based society through the perspective of valuing both lifelong and lifewide learning”¹⁴ in a practical sense, the calls for more recognition of non-formal learning are very often seen by youth workers as merely labour market-driven initiatives. Here I would like to argue that there are also some other reasons for better recognition of young people's learning in youth activities: it is about helping young people gain more self-confidence and develop self-awareness; for some young people the opportunity to participate in youth activities is their only chance of getting any kind of education; it could be a tool to fight discrimination and work on social inclusion, but also a way of raising the profile of youth work in general. At the same time, we should not be afraid of the employability issue as such. In spite of the fact that most youth work initiatives have nothing to do with the employment prospects of their participants, but are more concerned with the personal development and social activism (active citizenship) of young people, I guess no youth worker would disagree that there is a legitimate and increasingly important need amongst young people for better employability (see also the “non-formal learning triangle” in chapter A2). In particular, when you take into account the current unemployment rates all over Europe, isn't it our responsibility as youth workers to do all we possibly can to respond to that need?

About “power-phobia” and responsibility

Another large concern amongst youth workers and trainers related to recognition is the question: “Recognition by WHOM?” This question becomes increasingly important if the main power for facilitating the recognition of participants' learning is given to us - youth workers and trainers. Wow!

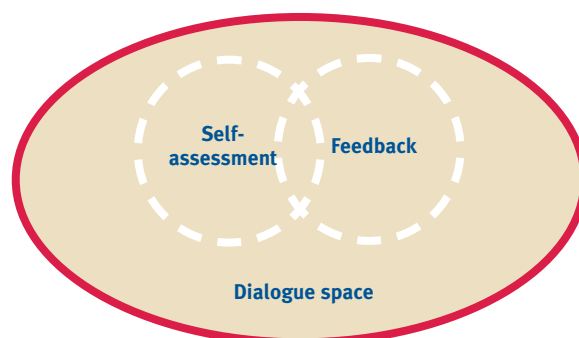
➔ **How do you deal with power associated with your role as a youth worker, trainer or mentor?**

Although we tend to create participant-centred, democratic learning settings in our activities, one should not underestimate the natural power imbalance inherent in this type of relationship - the power associated with the youth worker/mentor/trainer role¹⁵. For me, this power is not

necessarily a negative concept, if it is reflected on and constructively used. In fact, there is a strong link between the power and (educational) responsibility youth workers/mentors/trainers have and their participants' learning. And we should not be afraid of it! To be clear, I don't want to suggest that we should become autocratic educational workers and examiners, not at all. I would just like to argue that we should be aware of the power we have and take our educational responsibilities seriously for the future benefit of our participants!

Assessment or self-assessment – is that a question?

Related to the power issue, when thinking about recognition of learning in the youth field, many youth workers/mentors/trainers take the position that ONLY self-assessment carried out by participants is an acceptable form of validation of learning in non-formal education. Assessment carried out by youth workers/trainers is seen more as a “step back” to the traditional grading system in schools and totally against the values of non-formal education. But thinking in dichotomies, in an “either – or” way is too easy. So, with the approach inherent in Youthpass, we would say it is neither self-assessment, nor assessment, only. It is rather, *self-assessment enriched by feedback in a dialogue space*.



The key word here is *dialogue* which could include feedback or group conversation¹⁶ as a mutual process of exchange in a safe environment where two (or more) perspectives meet each other and search for a common “truth”. Why is that so? Although self-assessment is closer to the desired democratic and participant-centred nature of non-formal education, there are some points to take into consideration. One of the key prerequisites for adequate self-assessment is the level of a participant's development of their self-awareness competence¹⁷.

A3. Hitchhiker's guide to recognition of non-formal learning in the youth field

Self-awareness is the ability to be in contact with one's own strengths and weaknesses, and to neither overestimate nor underestimate one's own performance, behaviour or learning. This is an essential life skill which is best developed in relation to other people and through their feedback¹⁸.

That's why the *dialogue space* is important, not just for the sake of the result of the process (i.e. to have an accurate description of the learning outcomes), but also to support the development of a participant's self-awareness competence! In fact, the latter could be even more valuable for the participant than the outcome itself. What do you think?

How do you see the relationship between assessment and self-assessment in your youth work? How do you support the development in self-awareness in your participants/volunteers?

young people" in youth activities, one might wonder whether it is really possible to maintain an appropriate balance between preserving autonomy and creativity in youth work, on the one hand, and providing young people with the opportunity to gain (formal) recognition for their competences, on the other? Well, it seems to me that the people who worked on the development of Youthpass have seriously taken this dilemma into consideration and have offered some practical and creative solutions¹⁹.

Of course, it might seem like "more work and burden" for us, youth workers/mentors/trainers, to implement recognition tools, such as Youthpass, in our projects and, of course, we have the right to ask: "What do we get/lose with this?". But the main questions to ask ourselves still remain: "What do young people need to live in Europe nowadays? And what can we do about it?".

Oh, by the way... do I get a Youthpass for writing this text?

Recognition in practice

Coming to the end of our journey, and recalling the Minster's call for "recognising the skills and competences acquired by

¹ See how it feels to work with the recognition issue in: Markovic, D. (2006) : A step towards the recognition of non-formal education in Serbia and Montenegro, Coyote, issue 11, Partnership of the Council of Europe and European Commission, <http://www.youth-partnership.net/youth-partnership/publications/Coyote/11/Index>

² Adams, D. (1984): The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy, Macmillan. According to this great work of fiction, some time ago a group of hyper-intelligent pan-dimensional beings decided to finally answer the great question of Life, The Universe and Everything. To this end, they built an incredibly powerful computer, Deep Thought. After the great computer programme had run (a very quick seven and a half million years) the answer was announced. The Ultimate answer to Life, the Universe and Everything is... (you're not going to like it...) is... 42. Unfortunately, in the process, the original question was forgotten!

³ Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the recognition of the value of non-formal and informal learning within the European youth field, published in the Official Journal of the European Union, 20.7.2006.

⁴ ibid

⁵ For more information about the Lisbon process and how it relates to the youth field, see the chapter A4 "You hold the keys to Lifelong Learning" in this publication

⁶ Schild, H.J., Von Hebel, M. (2006) : Milestones for formal and social recognition of non-formal and informal learning in youth work, Coyote, issue 11, Partnership of the Council of Europe and European Commission, <http://www.youth-partnership.net/youth-partnership/publications/Coyote/11/Index>

A3. Hitchhiker's guide to recognition of non-formal learning in the youth field

⁷ Partnership of the Council of Europe and European Commission (2004): Pathways towards validation and recognition of education, training and learning in the youth field, working paper

⁸ Markovic, D. (2006) : A step towards the recognition of non-formal education in Serbia and Montenegro, Coyote, issue 11, Partnership of the Council of Europe and European Commission, <http://www.youth-partnership.net/youth-partnership/publications/Coyote/11/Index>

⁹ For more information see Chisholm, Lynne (2005): Cheat Sheet on Recognition Terminology in "Bridges for Recognition report", <http://www.salto-youth.net/bridgesforrecognition/>

¹⁰ ibid

¹¹ IYNF (2005): GOTCHA Handbook Attractive Youth Work – a Guide to Making Things Happen, IYNF, Prague, http://www.iynf.org/obsah/materials/documents.php?id_document=31

¹² For more information on concrete activities and examples of "attractive youth work" see IYNF's Variety magazine, <http://iynf.org/obsah/materials/variety.php>

¹³ For more information about learning potentials in the youth field, see chapters A4 "You hold the keys to Lifelong Learning" and B1 "How to support learning" in this publication

¹⁴ See Presidency Conclusions of the Lisbon European Council, 23-24.3.2000. http://www.consilium.europa.eu/cms3_fo/showPage.asp?lang=en&id=1296&mode=g&name=or Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/comp_en.html#2 or the chapter A4 "You hold the keys to Lifelong Learning" in this publication

¹⁵ Titley, G., editor (2002): T-kit Training Essentials, Partnership of the Council of Europe and European Commission, Strasbourg, http://www.youth-partnership.net/youth-partnership/publications/T-kits/T_kits

¹⁶ In the practical application of the Youthpass, there are certain differences when using it in different types of Actions. For more practical suggestions on how to use it in various youth activities, see Part B of this publication

¹⁷ Goleman, D. (1998): Working with emotional intelligence, Bantam books, New York

¹⁸ For more on the role of feedback in the educational setting see Luft, J. and Ingham, H. (1955): The Johari Window, a graphic model of interpersonal awareness or read Mark Taylor's Marker Column in Coyote, issue 12. p.46, <http://www.youth-partnership.net/youth-partnership/publications/Coyote/12/Index>

¹⁹ For more information and practical suggestions on how to learn and recognise it in various youth activities, see chapter A5 "Youthpass – more than a certificate" and Part B in this publication

A4

You hold the keys to Lifelong Learning

→ Manfred von Hebel

Why do we do this exercise? – an introduction

In November 2005 the European Commission proposed a recommendation on *Key competences for Lifelong Learning*. This recommendation provides, for the first time, a European reference tool on Key competences that, for instance, young people need for further learning and to participate actively in society. With this recommendation, the Commission aimed to encourage and facilitate national debates and reforms of curricula and to develop Lifelong and Lifewide Learning strategies. It was adopted by the European Parliament and the Council on 18 December 2006.

The Member States of the European Union are acting to modernise their education systems. This might include a shift from just transferring knowledge to developing more transferable competences that equip young people for adult life and further learning. This requires different approaches to organising learning, and new competences from everyone involved in educational processes.

Lifelong and Lifewide Learning implies taking into account the wide range of environments where learning takes place in addition to formal education. Formal, non-formal and informal learning are complementary in this respect. There, the youth field, as one of the main providers of non-formal learning, has an important role to play. Competences acquired in the youth field contribute at a very fundamental level towards personal fulfilment, active participation, employability and the social integration of young people.

This article explains why and how the framework of Key competences was developed and why it is highly relevant for non-formal learning in the youth field, and in particular for the recognition of this learning via instruments such as the Youthpass.

The diversity and complexity of our daily lives demands that in most cases we can't just rush to one single answer, to an either-or solution, but that we have to deal with tensions between aspects that might appear contradictory at first sight or seem to be incompatible. We have to think and act in a more integrated way and constantly take into account a great number of different opinions, ideas or concepts.

Our society depends more and more on knowledge and the provision of information. Therefore the demand for Key competences in personal, public and professional spheres is rising. The way in which people access information and services is changing, as are the structure and make-up of societies. The knowledge, skills and attitudes that everyone needs are changing as a result. They often go far beyond things people usually acquire at school.

What do these demands imply for Key competences that all of us need to acquire? Defining such competences can improve the assessment of whether and how well we are prepared to face current and future challenges.

→ How do you perceive learning in a lifelong and lifewide context? What does this provide for young people?

Proof needed? Please find some data

Within the European Union, there are many examples of successful formal education and training, but at the same time, action to overcome a number of obstacles still needs more effort put into it.

- > One fifth of under 15-year-olds attain only the most basic level of proficiency in reading.
- > Almost 15% of 18 – 24-year-olds left school prematurely.
- > Only 77% of 22-year olds have completed upper secondary education.
- > Almost a third of the European labour force is low skilled, but according to some estimates, by 2010, 50% of newly created jobs will require highly skilled workers and only 15 % will be for people with basic schooling¹.

Who cares? - Development

OECD

In late 1997, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development initiated the Definition and Selection of Competencies project. The aim was to provide a sound framework of key competences and to strengthen international surveys measuring the competence levels of young people and adults. This project brought together

A4. You hold the keys to Lifelong Learning

experts from a wide range of disciplines to work with stakeholders and policy analysts to produce a policy-relevant framework.

EU level

In March 2000, heads of states and governments of the European Union stressed that “every citizen must be equipped with the skills needed to live and work in this new information society” and that “a European framework should define the new basic skills to be provided through lifelong learning: IT skills, foreign languages, technological culture, entrepreneurship and social skills”.

Hence, quite a lot was done to further develop educational systems between 2000 and 2005. In March 2005, the European Council confirmed and relaunched the Lisbon objectives and called again for increased investment in education and skills.

The task now was to focus on identifying the Key competences every citizen should develop throughout life and how, together with traditional skills, they could be better integrated in the curricula, learnt, and maintained throughout our lives. Key competences should be genuinely available to everyone, including those with special needs, school drop-outs and adult learners. Validation of skills and Key competences should be promoted to support further learning and employability.

The work on Key competences is closely linked to other developments in improving European education and training systems such as the ongoing work on the development of a European Qualifications Framework, and initiatives seeking to strengthen and improve understanding and recognition of qualifications and competences acquired in the youth field.

Objectives – What do we want to achieve?

More concretely, objectives at EU level are to:

- 1) identify and define the Key competences necessary for personal fulfilment, social cohesion and employability in a knowledge society;
- 2) support Member States’ work on ensuring that by the end of initial education and training, young people have developed the Key competences to a level that equips them for adult life;

- 3) provide with the Key competences for Lifelong Learning a reference tool for policy makers, education providers, employers, and learners themselves to facilitate progress at national and European level.

How progress was made

Based on the political mandate, a working group on basic skills was established in 2001. It was made up of experts from Member States, EFTA/EEA countries, candidate countries and European associations. Expertise in the group included policy-makers, practitioners and academic researchers, covering both adult and compulsory education and European level stakeholders.

The Working Group preferred the term ‘competence’ to refer to a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes and ‘Key competence’ to define competences necessary for all. It thus includes basic skills, but goes beyond them.

The work has been debated at a range of conferences and seminars organised by stakeholders or international organisations. Ministers of Education discussed the ‘European dimension’ of Key competences at their informal meeting in Rotterdam in July 2004 and encouraged the Commission to continue working on this initiative.

The Recommendation finally proposed in 2005 and based also on the work of the OECD presents a European reference tool for Key competences and suggests how access to these competences can be ensured for all citizens through Lifelong Learning.

To the point – The Key competences framework

The framework sets out eight Key competences:

1. *Communication in the mother tongue;*
2. *Communication in foreign languages;*
3. *Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology;*
4. *Digital competence;*
5. *Learning to learn;*
6. *Social and civic competences;*
7. *Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship; and*
8. *Cultural awareness and expression.*

In accordance with international studies, ‘competence’ is defined here as a combination of knowledge, skills and

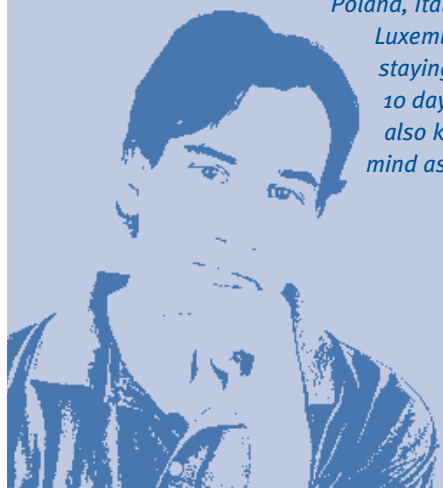
A4. You hold the keys to Lifelong Learning

attitudes appropriate to a particular situation. ‘Key competences’ are those that support our personal fulfilment, social inclusion, active citizenship and employment.

The numbers do not indicate any hierarchy; each of the competences is as important as the other. Many of the competences overlap and interlock: aspects essential to one domain will support competence in another. There are a number of themes that are applied throughout the framework: critical thinking, creativity, initiative taking, problem solving, risk assessment, decision taking, and managing feelings constructively play a role in all eight Key competences. All of them are crucial in the broad scope of learning.

We should develop the Key competences to a level that equips us to lead a satisfying life. The earlier the better, but the process is not a closed one and learning never ends. Key competences should be further developed, maintained and updated as part of Lifelong and Lifewide Learning at any possible opportunity.

Youth exchanges, for instance, foster ability in communication in the mother tongue as well as in a foreign language. Participation in activities in the youth field in general supports the development of social, intercultural and civic competences. To understand the meaning of the Key competences, it can be helpful to imagine a concrete project or event connected to youth work, something that you know very well from your own personal background. Or imagine a traditional youth exchange with 15 or 20 young people from, let's say, the United Kingdom, Poland, Italy and Luxembourg, staying together for 10 days; you might also keep this in mind as an example.



Key Competences



1. Communication in the mother tongue

What: Communication in the mother tongue is our ability to express thoughts, feelings and facts both orally or in writing (listening, speaking, reading and writing), and to interact with other people in an appropriate way in education and training, work, home and leisure.

How: We need to have some knowledge of basic vocabulary and grammar. This includes an awareness of the main types of verbal interaction, a range of literary and non-literary texts and the main features of different styles and registers of language. We should also be aware that language can be different in different situations.

Competence includes the skills to write and read different types of texts, search, collect and process information, use aids, formulate and express our own arguments in a convincing and appropriate way.



2. Communication in foreign languages

What: Communication in a foreign language is closely linked to communication in our mother tongue: it is based on the ability to understand and express thoughts, feelings and facts orally or in writing at work, home, leisure, education and training — according to our wants or needs. Communication in foreign languages also calls for skills such as mediation and intercultural understanding.

How: We need some knowledge of vocabulary and functional grammar and an awareness of the main types of verbal interaction and registers of language. Knowledge of the rules of a foreign society and cultural awareness is very important.

We should be able to understand spoken messages and to initiate, sustain and conclude conversations. Reading and understanding of texts according to our needs is important, as well as the skills to use aids and learn languages informally as part of lifelong learning.

A positive attitude involves an appreciation of cultural differences and diversity, and an interest and curiosity in languages and intercultural communication.

A4. You hold the keys to Lifelong Learning



3. Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology

What: Mathematical competence is our ability to use addition, subtraction, multiplication, division and ratios in mental and written arithmetic to solve a range of problems in everyday situations. Process and activity is as important as the knowledge itself.

How: Mathematical competence also involves the ability and willingness to use logical and spatial thinking and the presentation of formulae, models, graphs and charts.

Scientific competence refers to our ability and willingness to use the knowledge and methodology employed to explain the natural world. This is essential in order to identify questions and to draw evidence-based conclusions. Competence in technology is viewed as the application of that knowledge and methodology in response to perceived human wants or needs. Both areas of this competence involve an understanding of the changes caused by human activity and responsibility as an individual citizen.

It can also be an exercise in intercultural understanding, to share how we approach mathematical problems, and then try to find common solutions. For example: when you are in a group of people who have been taught in different countries, get them to show you how they work out 25 divided by 9. You will be surprised at just how many different ways everyone writes this down on paper... (Don't allow the use of a calculator!!)



4. Digital competence

What: Digital competence involves the confident and critical use of Information Society Technology (IST) for work, leisure and communication. It is underpinned by basic skills: the use of computers to retrieve, assess, store, produce, present and exchange information, and to communicate and participate in collaborative networks via the Internet.

How: Digital competence requires a sound understanding and knowledge of the nature, role and opportunities of IST in everyday personal and social life as well as at work. This includes main computer applications such as word processing, spreadsheets, databases, information storage and management, and an understanding of the opportunities

of the Internet and communication via electronic media (e-mail, network tools) for leisure, information-sharing and collaborative networking, learning and research.

But the reasonable use of Information Society Technology also requires a critical and reflective attitude towards the information available and responsible use of interactive media.



5. Learning to learn

What: 'Learning to learn' is the ability to organise our own learning. It includes effective management of time and information, both for ourselves and in groups. We should also be aware of our learning process and needs and identify different opportunities available to learn. It means gaining, processing and assimilating new knowledge and skills as well as seeking and making use of guidance. Learning to learn encourages us to build on prior learning and life experience.

Learning to learn is more comprehensively explained in this publication in chapter B1 "How to support learning".



6. Social and civic competences

What: These competences might be the most important ones for the youth field. Many of them can be acquired by active engagement in any kind of youth work or volunteering. They cover all forms of behaviour we might need to participate effectively in our social and working lives.

Competences connected to a social context become more important as societies are more diverse now; they can help us to resolve conflicts where necessary. Civic competence equips us to fully participate in civic life, based on knowledge of social and political concepts and structures and a commitment to active and democratic participation.

How: Personal and social well-being requires knowledge and understanding of how we and our families can maintain good physical and mental health. For successful interpersonal and social participation, it is essential to understand the codes of conduct and manners generally accepted in different societies and environments (e.g. at work). We need an awareness of basic concepts relating to individuals, groups, work organisations, gender equality, society and culture. It is also important to understand different cultures and how a national cultural identity interacts with European identity.

A4. You hold the keys to Lifelong Learning

Therefore we need skills

- > *to communicate in different environments;*
- > *to express and understand different viewpoints;*
- > *to negotiate and be able to create confidence; and*
- > *to feel empathy.*

We need to be able to cope with stress and frustration and to express it in a constructive way and we also need to distinguish between the personal and professional spheres.

It is important to have an interest in socio-economic development, intercultural communication, value diversity and respect others, and be prepared both to overcome prejudices and to compromise.

What else: Civic competence is based on knowledge of the concepts of democracy, citizenship, and civil rights, including how they are expressed in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and international declarations. We should know how these are applied by various institutions at local, regional, national, European and international level.

Knowledge of main events, trends and agents of change in national, European and world history and the present is essential; and in particular specific knowledge of European diversity.

How: We should be able to engage effectively with others in the public domain, and display solidarity and interest in solving problems affecting the local and wider community. These skills involve critical and creative reflection and constructive participation in our communities or neighbourhoods. They also involve decision-making at all levels from local to national and European level, in particular by voting.

Full respect for human rights, including equality as a basis for democracy, and an appreciation and understanding of differences between value systems of different religious or ethnic groups lay the foundations for a positive attitude. These skills include showing a sense of belonging to one's locality, country or the EU. Constructive participation also involves civic activities, support for social diversity and cohesion and sustainable development, and a readiness to respect the values and privacy of others.



7. Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship

What: These competences refer to our ability to turn ideas into action which is particularly important for youth work and youth initiatives. It includes creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives.

How: For the youth field, it is essential to know what kinds of opportunities are available for specific activities. Our skills should relate to proactive project management (involving skills such as planning, organising, managing, leadership and delegation, analysing, communicating, debriefing and evaluating and recording). We should be able to work both as individuals and collaboratively in teams. Being able to identify one's strengths and weaknesses, and to assess and take risks as and when warranted is essential.

An entrepreneurial and creative attitude is characterised by initiative, pro-activity, independence and innovation in one's personal and social life, as much as at work. It also includes motivation and determination to meet objectives.



8. Cultural awareness and expression

What: Appreciation of the importance of the creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions through a range of media, including music, performing arts, literature, and the visual arts.

How: Cultural knowledge includes a basic knowledge of major cultural works, including popular contemporary culture as an important part of human history. It is essential to understand the cultural and linguistic diversity in Europe and the need to preserve it.

Skills relate to both appreciation and expression. We should be able to express ourselves through a variety of media and as far as we are able with our own abilities and at the same time appreciate and enjoy works of art and performances.

→ If you read the description of the Key competences do you find the potential for learning in a youth exchange described fully? What is missing? How do you offer learning linked to Key competences in your activity?

A4. You hold the keys to Lifelong Learning

What does it mean to you? – A youth perspective

One of the key issues for modernising education systems is recognising the learner's particular situation: their prior experiences, learning needs and aspirations should be taken into account, as well as broader issues that link to social and employment policies, and require the engagement of all partners.

Non-formal and informal learning activities within the youth field are shaped by a specific type of learning which has been developed over years and takes into account the current situation of young people in societies. In particular, non-formal and informal learning activities within the European youth field are based on intercultural principles which support learning and improve communication between people who come from different backgrounds.

The work and achievements of young people and those active in youth work and youth organisations deserve greater recognition in order to enhance their value and visibility, and should be given due consideration by employers, formal education establishments and civil society in general.

The youth field contributes in many various ways to the acquisition of Key competences for Lifelong and Lifewide Learning. Participation in activities in the youth field in general supports the development of social and civic competences. Youth initiatives active at local level give young people the opportunity to develop their knowledge, skills and attitudes in entrepreneurship. Furthermore, youth work contributes in different ways to the acquisition of all other competences in a comprehensive and sustainable way.

As a result of inequities in earlier stages of education, young people from disadvantaged backgrounds often do not achieve the level of qualifications needed to easily access the labour market or higher education. Policies to reinforce efficiency and equity of education systems, therefore, have to combine all available forms of learning to facilitate easier access. Typical non-formal learning approaches, such as mentoring programmes, guidance and counselling, are crucial and should be provided early.

The persistently high level of youth unemployment in the EU is a serious problem. Labour market entrants with the lowest levels of educational achievement face the highest risks of unemployment. A cross-sectoral approach that provides better coordination of formal, non-formal and informal learning would facilitate smoother transitions from school to work.


And how to go on?

Through the Key competences recommended by the European Union, a debate on what competences each young person should develop has been initiated. Social aspects of learning have been given a more important role: as educational disadvantages are often a combination of personal, social, cultural and economic circumstances, they need to be tackled in collaboration with other sectors.

The youth field has an important role to play in supporting young people's learning. The Key competences offer an opportunity to foster the discussion within the youth field and to contribute to a wider discussion in the field of education.

The European Pact for Youth identifies employment and social inclusion as key concerns and as major priorities on which to concentrate in order to enable young people to play an active role in society. Non-formal and informal learning contribute essentially to the personal development, social inclusion, active citizenship and employability of young people. The Pact is an important tool within the Lisbon Strategy for reaching the major goal of including all young people in society. It is crucial that young people and their organisations are key partners, together with other stakeholders, in the follow-up process and should be closely involved in implementing the European Youth Pact and in its impact on recognition of non-formal and informal learning in the youth field.

Youthpass is based on the Key competences framework which marks important progress towards more comprehensive recognition of learning outcomes in the youth field at European level. The Commission, together with the Member States and relevant stakeholders, is currently developing a broader approach that goes beyond the Youth in Action Programme and includes different forms of learning in the youth field from local to European level. One of the pre-conditions for this work will be a basic description of the contribution of the youth field to the acquisition of Key competences for Lifelong Learning.

 ***What do you think the contribution of the youth field is to the Key competences in general and to each individual Key competence?***

¹ Commission Staff Working Paper: Progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training 2005 Report SEC (2005) 419, Brussels, 22.3.2005

A5

Youthpass – more than a certificate of participation

✦ Rita Bergstein and Mark Taylor

*Youthpass is the instrument of validation and recognition for the **Youth in Action** Programme. Through the Youthpass certificate, the European Commission ensures that the learning experience gained through the Youth in Action Programme is recognised as an educational experience and a period of non-formal learning.*

Youth in Action Programme Guide, 2009

Have a look back at any certificates you have and ask yourself some questions:

- > *which certificate am I most proud of?*
- > *which one would I show to other people?*
- > *what did I have to do in order to get them?*
- > *how much do I remember about the experience of gaining each certificate?*

Your answers will depend on a lot of things, probably including at least some of these:

- > *the amount of work or effort I put into getting them*
- > *how important the experience was in my life*
- > *whether I could make use of the certificate in any way*
- > *what other people thought when I showed it to them*
- > *and even how nice it looked!*

With Youthpass, we are looking at – yes! – a certificate, but more than that!

Valuing participation in the Youth in Action programme

With over 60,000 people participating directly each year, the programme has something to show for itself as it builds on nearly 20 years of experience since the original Youth for Europe Programme was established. Up until now there has been no overall strategy to help people show what they have put into or gained from their experiences in it. Some exchange and training course organisers have provided simple certificates of participation and most participants in the European Voluntary Service have received a certificate and an annex describing what they did. This is where Youthpass comes in. The mechanisms have been

constructed after much thought, research, consultation and testing across the countries of the European Union to see what would be effective.

A whole range of people and institutions, (we call them “stakeholders”), could potentially be interested in the outcomes of implementing Youthpass - especially if we see it as part of the whole process of valuing participation in the programme and giving more recognition to the participants. So, who are they, these people and institutions who might be interested in seeing how Youthpass can demonstrate involvement in “an educational experience and period of non-formal learning”? Here is a selection:



A5. Youthpass – more than a certificate of participation

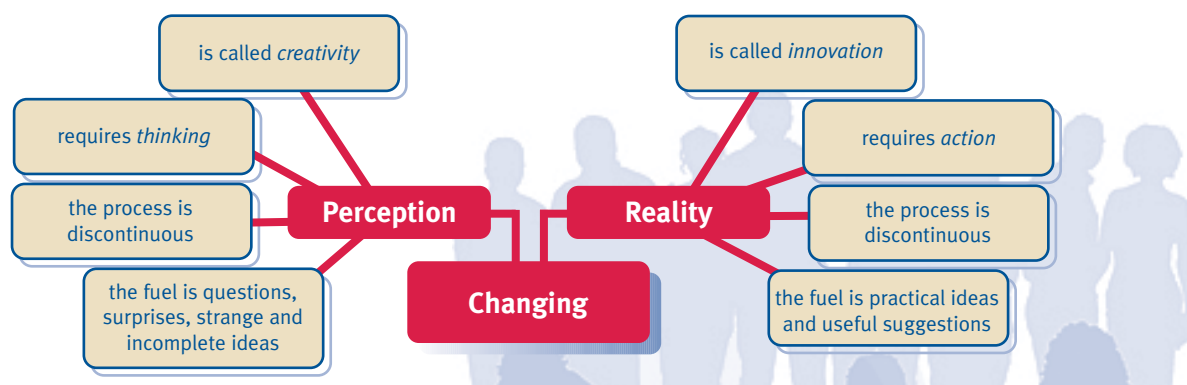
...> Can you think of any more stakeholders to add to the list?

...> What do you see as “the reality” now? What is your “perception”?

To produce change in any field is not easy. Youthpass is BIG change. To produce change in the educational field, you need a critical mass of opinion, research, practice and reflection and this is also true in the field of youth non-formal education across Europe. As Luc De Brabandere explains in *The Forgotten Half of Change*¹, for change to be effective, we need to change twice! We need to change reality within a given system and we need to change the perception of that reality. So what are the characteristics of these two linked types of change?

Let's get explicit!

Putting Youthpass into operation within the different opportunities available in the Youth in Action Programme will have a lot of effects and it can be argued that the main one will be to motivate participants and their support workers to be EXPLICIT about what, how, when and why they have been learning through their experiences. And this will be new for many people. And it will be a challenge. And as people meet this challenge, they will see that they can build



Let's look at the **reality**:

- > *there are an increasing number of initiatives to capture, document, and confirm the non-formal learning of young people and those who work with them – and Youthpass takes its place with them;*
- > *the seemingly eternal debate about quality is beginning to bear fruit, looking at both the quality of specific non-formal learning opportunities and the relevance of the content and skills gained – see chapter A2 “Getting interested in non-formal education and learning”.*

Excitement mounts when we look at **perceptions**:

- > *the value of non-formal learning in youth work is starting to get the codified or formal recognition it deserves – see chapter A4 “You hold the keys to Lifelong Learning”;*
- > *individual young people have the chance to look at and demonstrate their competences and learning in new ways;*
- > *practitioners can take new pride in their work*

on much of what has become good practice in the Programme and within youth work in general over the past few years. [See chapter A2 “Getting interested in non-formal learning and education” for ideas about quality in non-formal learning provision].

Recent research² has shown that non-formal learning practitioners have a tendency to base their work on a lot of shared assumptions about what is the right way to organise and facilitate learning in such contexts. But they rarely talk about the how's and why's openly, not because they have something to hide, but just because that is the way things are done, “naturally”.

A5. Youthpass – more than a certificate of participation

...→ *For example, when you ask a group of young people or youth workers to get together, they will often stand in a circle – why do you think that is so?*

What we are discovering, increasingly, is that the quality of learning improves when people are more open about both learning processes and learning goals.

This means here that all participants in Youth in Action activities will be encouraged to

- > *define their learning goals at the beginning of their involvement*
- > *review how they are learning during the process and adjust their learning goals as necessary*
- > *reflect on their learning individually and with others after the activity has finished, and*
- > *ensure that they have a written record, not only of their participation, but also of their learning outcomes.*

[Have a look at chapter B1 “How to support learning” for a host of ideas and tips on making this a reality within the Youth in Action Programme; and the rest of Section B for step-by-step suggestions for use within each Action].

As we can see, using Youthpass is definitely more than just issuing a pretty certificate. It means looking at each project as a learning opportunity and paying attention to this aspect from preparation, through to running and then evaluating what we do.

These processes will use the Key competences for Lifelong Learning as their major reference point...

Potential pioneers

As far as we know, Youthpass is the first system set up using the Key competences as the basis for defining and recognising learning within a European programme. In this sense, we are all pioneers, everyone involved in the Programme!

[Have a look at the chapter A4 “You hold the keys to Lifelong Learning” for an account of how the Key competences were developed and a vision for the future].

For Youthpass to be exploited successfully, all of us need to have a good understanding of the Key competences and how they relate to youth work practice. An incomplete list of “us” must include at least these people: participants, youth workers and leaders, administrators in national agencies, mentors of volunteers, and trainers. This introduction will demand quite a lot of effort in the early stages as we get used to the terminology and to the suggested ways of implementing the system.

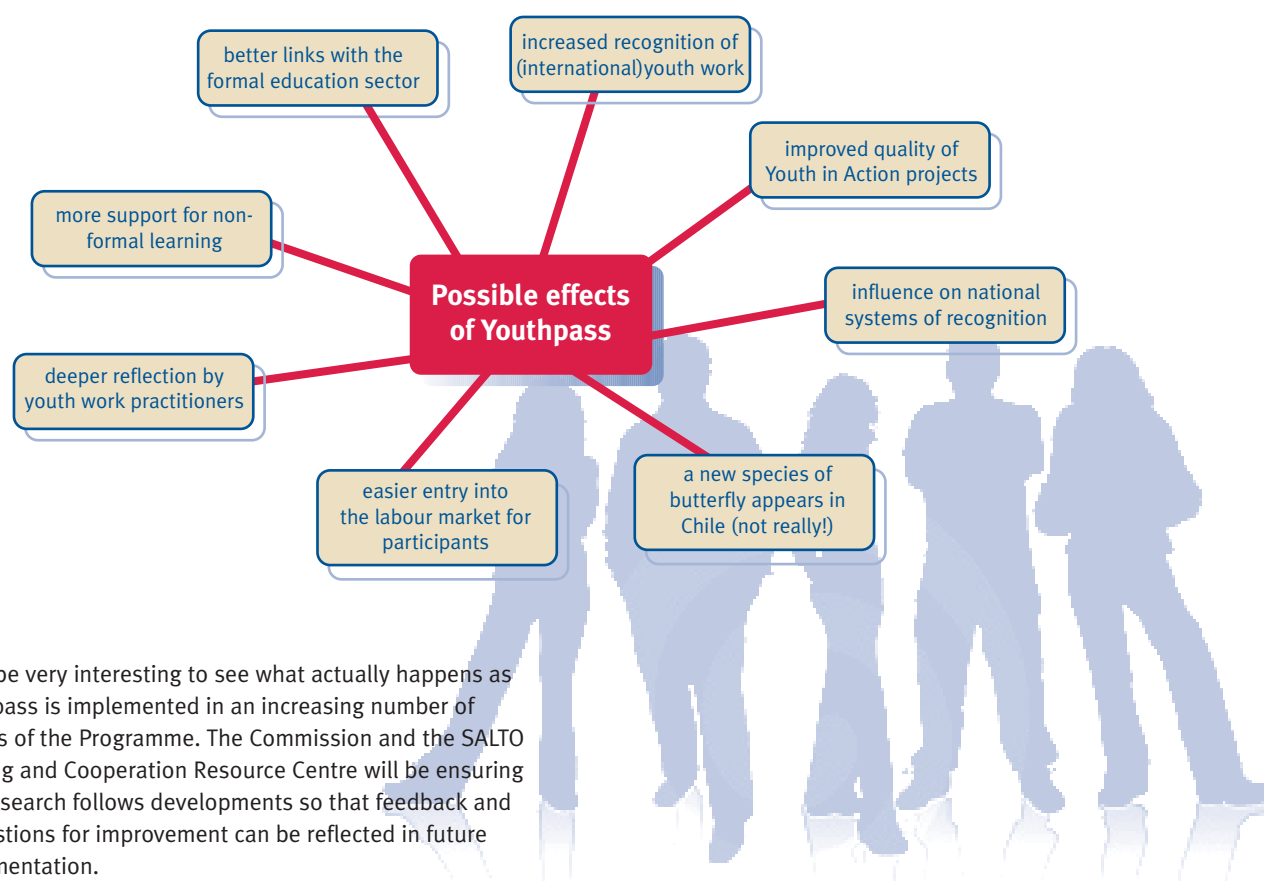
Certainly, there are those who are worried about extra workload and extra demands being imposed on them. In answer to this, during the test phases we have run so far, the participants have been overwhelmingly positive and excited about trying to run with the new experience and give voice to their evaluations. In this way, we have received much constructive criticism about how to implement Youthpass, from technical suggestions about improving internet compatibility through to guidance on feedback procedures within training courses. This publication shows how this is a continuing learning experience even for the people responsible for conceiving of and approving the way the system will work in the new programme.

Ripples, waves, quarks, strangeness and charm

What range of effects will the introduction of Youthpass cause? We don't know exactly! During discussions in the preparation stages, some have mentioned that Youthpass might well be described as “a sea change” in international youth work. A “sea change” is an expression people use when they talk of a development which alters a situation quite fundamentally. You have to change direction, you have to re-examine what you do. In the words of Max Dupree:

A5. Youthpass – more than a certificate of participation

“We cannot become what we need to be by remaining what we are”. In our increasingly complex societies it is not possible to predict all the effects of our actions or changes – many of us know of the chaos theory which tells us that a butterfly falling from the sky in Chile can lead to an earthquake on the other side of the world! But maybe we can take the opportunity here to gaze into our crystal ball:



It will be very interesting to see what actually happens as Youthpass is implemented in an increasing number of Actions of the Programme. The Commission and the SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre will be ensuring that research follows developments so that feedback and suggestions for improvement can be reflected in future implementation.

Please make sure to use the Youthpass website to contribute your experiences, constructive criticism, and descriptions of any new butterflies you come across...

¹ De Brabandere, Luc (2005): *The Forgotten Half of Change - Achieving greater creativity through changes in perspective*, Dearborn Publishing, Chicago
ISBN: 1-4195-0275-1

² See, for example, Chisholm, L. with Hoskins B., Sorensen M.S., Moos L. & Jensen I. (2006) *ATTE Volume 2 – External Evaluation*, Council of Europe. ISBN 978-92-871-5797-3

Introduction to Part B

✦ Rita Bergstein

In Part A of this guide you can read about

- > *how and why Youthpass was developed,*
- > *what non-formal learning and education is in this context,*
- > *where the foundations of Youthpass lie and*
- > *what current developments there are at European level.*

Now it is time to concentrate on what we mean when we say that *Youthpass is the tool for recognition of non-formal learning within the different Actions of the Youth in Action Programme*. Just to remind you: if we use the term *recognition* in the Youthpass context we mean

1. Recognition of participants regarding their individual non-formal learning process
2. Social recognition at local, regional, national and international levels for the youth field
3. Recognition to raise the employability of young people and youth workers, leaders and multipliers active in the youth field

But recognition does not fall from heaven: recognition is also a process we can start ourselves in our own lives and activities. In order to make the best of the opportunities offered by the Youth in Action Programme, we offer a wide range of entry points and educational advice to enable you to start dealing with recognition of non-formal learning using Youthpass.

In this part of the Youthpass Guide you will find information on:

- > *how learning is perceived in Youth in Action activities and how you can support participants at different stages of projects,*
- > *what the specific details of Youthpass for Youth Exchanges (Action 1.1) are, what it looks like, how you can use it in Youth Exchanges and how young people can get and use their Youthpass...*

> *what the specific details of Youthpass for European Voluntary Service (Action 2) are, what it looks like, how it can be used in a path way of a European Voluntary Service project and how young people can use it in their future lives...*

> *what the specific details of Youthpass for Training Courses (Action 4.3) are, what it looks like, what it might mean for youth workers, youth leaders and other multipliers and users taking part in training courses, where the link to recognition of non-formal learning is...*

For further reading, it is possible to just focus on Youthpass for one concrete Action.

If you want to focus on learning aspects in Youth in Action activities please go to page 30.

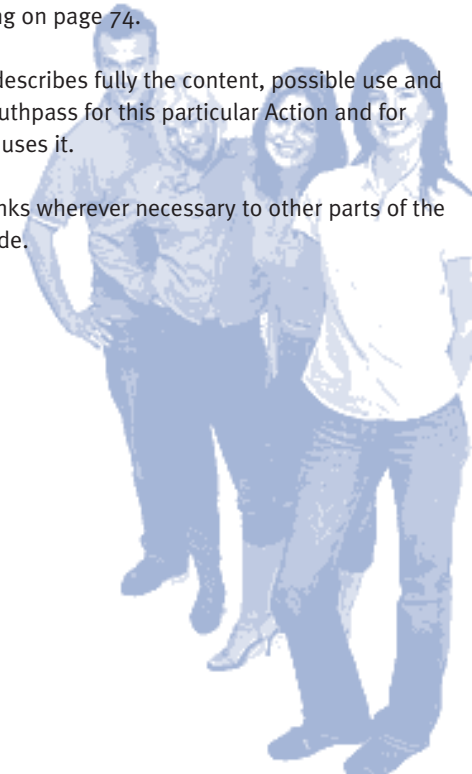
If you want to concentrate on Action 1.1 please go to page 46.

If you want to start immediately with Action 2 start with page 56.

And if you are organising a Training Course, focus on the chapter starting on page 74.

Each chapter describes fully the content, possible use and meaning of Youthpass for this particular Action and for everyone who uses it.

You will find links wherever necessary to other parts of the Youthpass guide.



B1

How to support learning

✦ Paul Kloosterman

This chapter aims to help you get to grips with the term 'learning' in relation to concrete activities in the Youth in Action Programme. Different methods and tools are described to help young people and others take their learning into their own hands, plan their learning and reflect on and assess this learning.

In this publication you will read a lot about learning. Because Youthpass is about learning. But does that mean that we didn't learn previously in Youth Exchanges, Training and EVS-projects before Youthpass was introduced? Of course a lot was learnt. We all know that young people have learnt intensively from their experiences in these programmes.

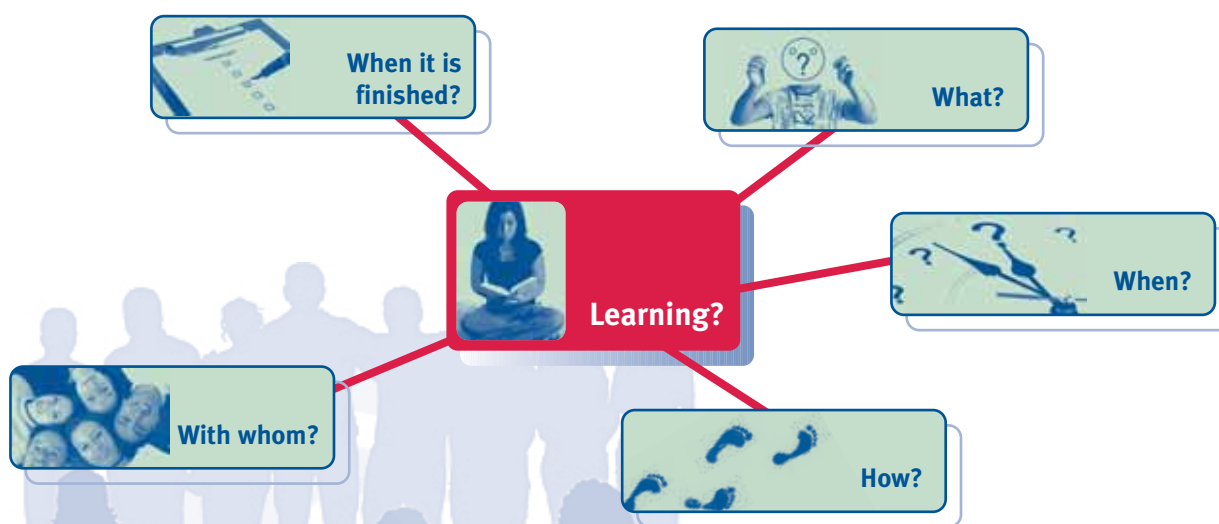
The Youthpass process wants to make that learning more explicit. By using Youthpass, young people will have to be more specific about what they have learnt and in what way

they have learnt. On the one hand this is to show others more clearly what has been learnt and, on the other, to make themselves more aware of their learning.

This is not something that happens just like that. It demands from the learner the ability to take a step back and look at his/her own learning.

This involves asking ourselves questions like:

- > *What do I want/need to learn?*
- > *How can I learn it?*
- > *When will I learn?*
- > *Who can help me learn it?*
- > *What, for me, is the best way to learn?*
- > *How do I know that I succeeded in learning?*



Such questions are quite new for many young people, but not only for them. In our 'school learning', others decide what we have to learn, how we should learn it and when we have finished that learning. Now you take that responsibility on your own shoulders, which probably makes learning much more interesting and exciting. But still, it's something new, something you have to learn: learning to learn.

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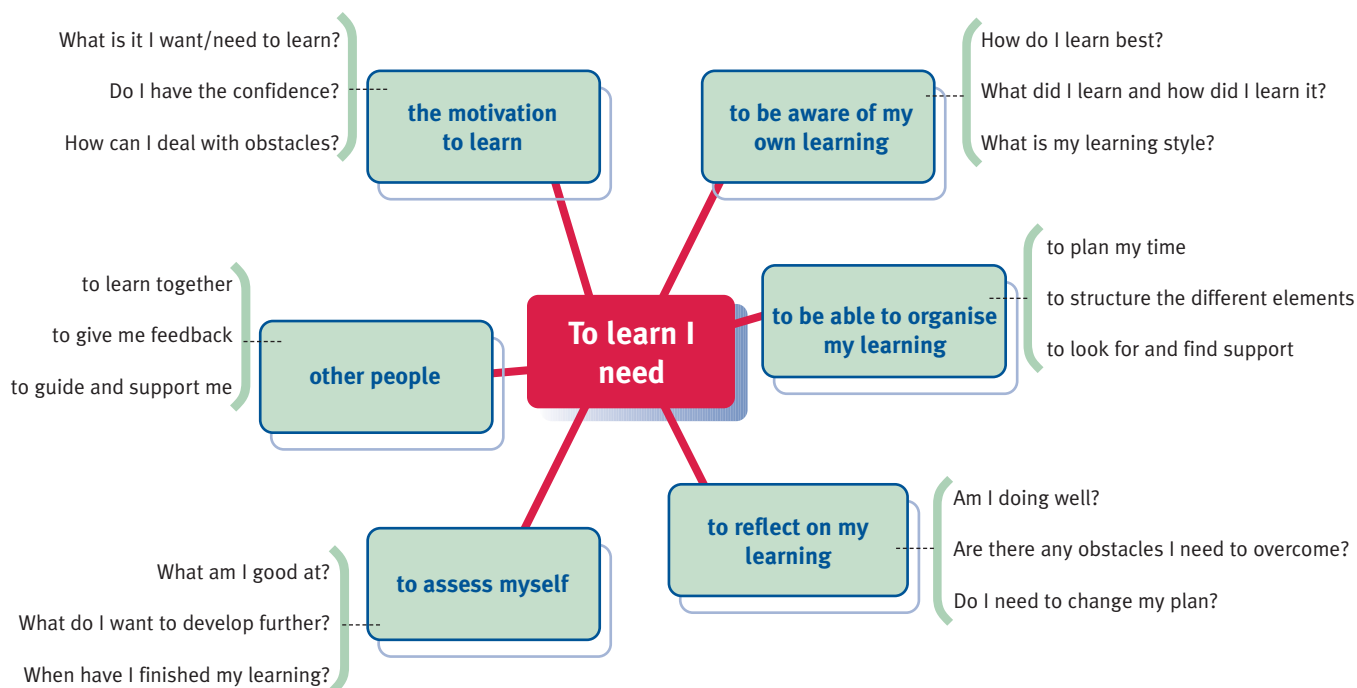
One of the most important consequences of the introduction of Youthpass is that young people will need to be assisted and guided in learning how to learn, in making their learning plans and in reflecting on and assessing their learning. Something which, in turn, has consequences for the preparation and running of projects, for the programme and for the role of the youth worker, youth leader, mentor, trainer ...

The one who acts is the learner; the one who is responsible is the learner. This does not mean that learners have to do it all by themselves. People who direct their own learning often have a strong need to work together with and be supported by others.

What do you need to be a learner who can take ownership of your own learning? What do you need to learn how to learn?

Learning to learn

Learning to learn is one of the eight Key competences in the framework of the Lifelong Learning initiative of the European Union. Being able to learn is a prerequisite when it comes to lifelong learning. Learning to learn is about a host of skills, such as: organising your own learning, managing your time, identifying opportunities, being able to deal with obstacles, looking for and using others for support.



B1. How to support learning

How do I learn ...?

Have you ever thought about this question? And the follow-up question: How do I learn best?

People learn in very different ways. The big advantage of organising your own learning is that you don't have to follow what others have planned for you – you can do it in your favourite way. But what is your favourite way?

If you want to take responsibility for your own learning, it's important to take a step back and look at the way you have learnt so far, what was easy for you, what was difficult, how you could do things differently.

Many young people will not immediately get that excited when they hear the word 'learning'. They might connect it to words like 'school', 'boring', 'difficult' or even 'failure'. A lot of them will see learning as something 'you have to do' because others tell you it's important. Just telling them that learning can also be fun and something you can do because you want to, is probably not enough to take away this kind of negative approach.

It might be good to spend some time on the topic of learning, to share and discuss experiences, to connect those experiences to those of others, to also recall those moments of learning which were good, pleasant or even fun, or were difficult but worthwhile in the end, to think about all the things they learnt outside school: talking, dancing, kissing, games ... To find out that a lot of learning is something you do because you want to, you need to and it is something you do for yourself and sometimes even for others. Something that might even be fun!

A session on learning

while preparing a Youth Exchange

A way to start 'discussing learning' might be to learn something together:

- > *a dance*
- > *making portrait photos*
- > *juggling with three balls*
- > *a conjuring trick*
- > *anything else which is challenging, exciting and fun*

Choose something where your participants can make some progress in a relatively short period of time. If it's

connected to the programme of the Youth Exchange you are preparing with the group, it's even better because you will be able to make use of it later.

After practising, give everybody the opportunity to show how far they got. Make sure that it does not end up as a competition.

Then start a talk with questions like:

- > *How did you start to learn? Did you make a plan or did you just start doing?*
- > *Are you satisfied with how far you got?*
- > *What were the difficult moments?*
- > *How did you try to overcome these moments?*
- > *Did you ask for help from others?*
- > *Did you look at the others? Did they have different strategies?*
- > *How do you think you can further improve? What would your next steps be?*

Learning styles

Learning styles is about trying to define the ways in which people prefer to learn. If you have a look at books or internet sites about learning, you will find many different ways to describe learning styles. Probably the two best known ones are the VARK and Kolb's Learning Style Inventory.

VARK

In this model, learning is related mainly to the senses:

- V**isual learners (learn through seeing)
- A**uditory learners (learn through listening)
- R**eading writing (learning by processing text)
- K**inesthetic learners (learning by doing)

Kolb's learning styles:

- > *converger (active experimentation – abstract conceptualisation)*
- > *accommodator (active experimentation – concrete experience)*
- > *assimilator (reflective observation – abstract conceptualisation)*
- > *diverger (reflective observation – concrete experience)*

(For more information about learning styles, you can start by having a look at the Wikipedia website entry which provides many links to go further:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Learning_styles)

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Altogether, there are over eighty different learning style models. A series of tests has been developed from these models. By taking these tests – so the theory goes – you can find out more about your preferred learning style. Many youngsters like to do this kind of test and it can be another helpful way of starting to discuss and think about your learning.

Over the past few years, these models have been under discussion and have faced a lot of criticism, partly because of the ‘poor research’ they are based on and partly because of the effect they may have on people. Discovering your preferred learning style might be dangerous and you might put yourself “in a box”, thinking that you can only learn in a certain way. *“I’m an auditory learner so don’t give me a book!”*

Taking into account such criticism, when offering this kind of test to participants, make it clear that the results of such a test are only an indicator and should not be regarded as *the fixed way* you have to learn in the future. It gives some direction but be sure not to put people into boxes! The next time they do such a test, the result might differ. People can also change the way they learn.

Awareness of your own learning is not something you have at a certain moment and then it’s done. It’s an ongoing process in which you will continually find new things about the way you learn; you will change and develop. The important factor is to develop the ability to look at yourself when learning.

A prepared and learning team

It is not only the young people in the Youth Exchange or the participants of the Training Course, who are lifelong learners. Why not turn your team of youth workers or trainers into a learning team? It might help you a lot in dealing with the topic in the group *and* in becoming an excellent team. Activities you offer to participants can also be used in your team.

Some ideas to put into practice:

- > *a one hour exchange session where you share the most important thing you learnt over the past two years and how you learnt it*
- > *Every team member makes their own learning plans for the duration of the project and shares this with the others*
- > *in a Training Course, trainers work in pairs and give each other feedback after each session*
- > *a feedback session in the team*

This kind of activity can help the team to:

- > *discuss the topic of ‘learning’*
- > *find different ways of working with ‘learning’ in the programme*
- > *come to a common understanding and approach*
- > *further develop professional competences*

Planning to learn

When the learner is the one to act, the learner is also the one to plan, deciding what to learn and seeing how and when to do it. How can we assist young people in stepping into that process?

Learning is about change, about acquiring something new: new skills, new attitudes, new knowledge. To be motivated to learn, you need to have a vision of where you want to go, a future perspective. When you have certain ideas about what you want for your future, you feel the need to learn.

It’s not something young people think about every day. It’s even said that ‘young people these days have only a very short-term future perspective’. They want it now! But of course young people have wishes and expectations for their future, both in the short term as well as the long term. But they might need some assistance to articulate those wishes and make their expectations more concrete. Sometimes it

B1. How to support learning

can help to ask a young person where she/he wants to be in five years. A free fantasy about this is often easier than thinking about “What am I going to do next week?”. From that picture of the young person in five years’ time, you can extract wishes and needs for planning within a shorter perspective.

When planning a Youth Exchange with your group, you are talking about the future. It will be about wishes, expectations and probably also fears concerning that event. When you have a conversation with a future EVS volunteer about what he/she wants to learn during the project, you might well also talk about future expectations concerning study, work and other plans for the more long-term future.

Two examples:

Example 1

‘Living in a village’ – Youth Exchange related

Tomek is working with a group of five young Polish people, preparing them for a Youth Exchange that will take place in three months’ time in Belgium. The theme of the Youth Exchange is ‘Living in a village’ and there will be groups from four countries: Ireland, France, Belgium and Poland, who all come from small villages. Although they are still working on a detailed programme for the exchange, it has already been decided that they will make a video in which young people are interviewed about what it is like to live in a small village. There will also be a group working on a journal, they will prepare national dishes for each other and there will be workshops on ‘making the village a stage’, meaning all kinds of street performances. The working language will be English.

Tonight the Polish group will talk about their learning objectives. The aim for the evening is that – by the end of the evening – all five will have written down a list of what they want to learn in the preparation stage and during the exchange.

For the first half hour, Tomek gives them two options:

- > make a sketch
- > make a collage

that shows how you want to see yourself after the Youth Exchange.

Three of them choose to work on a collage and sit down with magazines, papers, pencils, markers, paste and scissors. The other two leave for another room to prepare their sketches. After a little bit more than the planned 30 minutes, they come back to show the results of their work and talk about what their collages and sketches mean.

While the group talks, Tomek writes down the different words and sentences that come up:

- > *I can speak better English.*
- > *I can do a clown-act.*
- > *I know some Belgian words.*
- > *I published my first article.*
- > *I know how to handle a camera.*
- > *I have friends from three other countries.*
- > *I will be in contact with the other groups.*
- > *I can juggle with three balls.*
- > *We can perform an act in the village square.*
- > *I have a Belgian girlfriend.*
- > *I’m not afraid of flying anymore.*
- > *I’m in a video, being interviewed.*
- > *I have carried out my first interview.*

B1. How to support learning

examples

Then Tomek gives them all five red and five green Post-its and asks them to write down individually on the green ones, what they are most looking forward to, and on the red ones, what they fear. He asks them to write down at least two things on the red and two on the green. He gives them 15 minutes, but after ten they are already finished and put the Post-its on the wall.

Red:

- > *They will not understand me.*
- > *The Belgians and French will stick together, speaking French.*
- > *Everything will be very expensive for us.*
- > *I don't know how to make contact with the others.*
- > *Maybe they will do things in very different ways.*
- > *They might see us Polish people as stupid.*
- > *They will hate our food.*
- > *Most things will be done by the Irish because they speak better English.*
- > *Flying*
- > *They have very different rules from us.*
- > *We won't manage to talk with the others.*
- > *What if I don't like the food?*
- > *What if they explain all the technical things for the video work in English?*
- > *I don't know what to talk about with youngsters from other countries.*

Green:

- > *the journey to Belgium*
- > *street theatre workshops*
- > *seeing Brussels*
- > *partying with the others*
- > *making a really good Polish dinner*
- > *presenting the video*
- > *tasting Belgian beer*
- > *being away from home for ten days*
- > *arriving at the place where we will stay*
- > *working together with people from other countries, in English*
- > *eating a French dinner with French wine*
- > *singing Irish songs*
- > *learning to be a clown*
- > *making a video out of everything that has been recorded*

The group then talks for more than an hour about their fears and the things they are looking forward to. Tomek asks questions like:

- > Do you understand the other Post-its?
- > Do you see things you hadn't thought about?
- > Are there others who have the same fear?
- > What can you do to overcome that fear?
- > Are there things that you can learn before we go?
- > How can we help each other?
- >?

For the last half hour, Tomek invites them to write down on a piece of paper what they think they can learn from the Youth Exchange, both from the preparations as well as from the event itself. He tells them that this might not be that easy but asks them to just write down what comes into their heads now and keep the piece of paper for themselves. Next week they will go on with their planning and he promises to explain about Youthpass and what all this has to do with it.

B1. How to support learning

Example 2

'Isabel goes EVS' – European Voluntary Service – related

Isabel will start her EVS project in Italy in 6 weeks. Today she is taking the train from Porto to Lisbon where she will talk with Magda from the sending organisation. She has met Magda once already and she helped Isabel a lot in making contacts and finding the organisation in Tivoli near Rome. But today their talk will be about something different. It will be quite long. Magda has scheduled three hours for it, and the topic will be: 'What do I want to get out of my EVS?'.

Isabel has been thinking a lot about this question over the past few days but has not found it easy. For her, the most important reason for going to Italy for a year is to have time to think about what she wants to happen afterwards. She wants to take some distance from the life she has lived till now. Things got out of hand last year. She left school, found a job, got sacked and was caught by the police stealing a wallet out of a car. When she ended up in a police station, she decided that this all had to stop. Her parents tell her it's all because of bad friends, which might be partly true, but Isabel has the feeling that she needs some time for herself. EVS seems to be a great opportunity.

But still, that doesn't answer the question: 'What do I want to get out of my EVS?'

So, she is a bit nervous when she arrives at Magda's organisation. But she is set at ease immediately by Magda who tells her that they will have the whole afternoon together to find the answer to that question.

Magda asks her a lot of questions. Isabel tells her everything about her disastrous year and the need to 'take some distance'. Magda compliments Isabel on her ability to talk about her life in a very clear and understandable way. Then she starts to ask questions about what 'taking some distance' will mean in practice. Difficult questions to answer, but they help Magda understand things better and to put 'taking some distance' into practice.

They talk about the tasks that Isabel will carry out as a volunteer in Tivoli. What are the things she feels she can do easily and what are the things that might be more difficult? They talk about Isabel's expectations of her Italian mentor, the way she thinks she will make friends there, how she will manage to cook for herself, if she has any plans for free-time activities, the language course she will take and many, many more things. Magda mainly asks questions which help Isabel identify exactly what she wants, what steps she has to take to reach those goals and who might be the people who can help her.

Then Magda puts a kind of form on the table which she describes as a 'learning plan'. She suggests that Isabel makes a learning plan for the first 6 weeks of her stay in Italy, writing down what she wants to learn in that period, how she wants to do it, who she wants help from and when she wants to have it done by.



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Learning Plan Name: Isabel			
What	How	With whom	When
Learning to be able to survive in Italian; speak 'basic Italian' allowing me to express myself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - language course which will start in my second week - speaking Italian in the organisation - speaking Italian (not English) at home with my two housemates (also on EVS from Estonia and the Netherlands) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the other course participants and teacher - asking colleagues to be patient - trying to make an agreement with housemates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - start second week and will last 8 weeks - in the first few days of my stay - during our first 'house-meeting' - after six weeks, I want to feel able to express myself in simple situations
To stay myself when meeting people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - to be honest about how I feel - to express my opinion - to write about it every day in my diary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I want my mentor to help me in this - maybe also my housemates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - starting immediately from the first day - weekly talk about my experiences with mentor - every day diary
Taking good care of myself, meaning food!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a healthy meal every day - buying a cook book - finding others to eat and cook with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I will check with my housemates - have to see who I will meet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - should start cooking from the beginning - after two weeks I can check out my housemates - after six weeks I want to have a new food plan
Knowing and understanding my tasks in the organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - asking for documents about the organisation and the projects to read - having talks with those who are responsible for the projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - making a plan with my mentor - colleagues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - plan with mentor in the second week - reading documents and having talks in weeks 3 and 4

Before Isabel goes home, she gets some documents from Magda with information about the Youthpass. Magda asks her to also have a look at the Key competences and to see how she can link these to her own learning objectives - and she encourages Isabel to also look at a more long-term perspective.

B1. How to support learning

Setting and planning learning objectives

When you help young people set and plan their learning objectives, the following points might be worth considering:

Set objectives which connect to the young person's wishes and needs.

It's important that the young person feels ownership of their learning plan. The risk is that you, with the best intentions, suggest objectives that you feel might serve the youngster. In the end the youngster will work for you, not for him/herself.

Describe objectives as concretely as possible in terms of tangible and observable behaviour.

'Learning to communicate' is quite vague, 'learning to express my own opinion' is already more concrete, 'giving my opinion in the meeting with the group next Saturday' is very concrete and is something which can be easily evaluated afterwards.

Make sure the objectives can be evaluated, so that progress becomes visible.

Seeing progress is motivating, ticking a box as 'done' gives a good feeling. So make sure that objectives are described that way.

Set realistic and achievable objectives.

Sometimes young people have the tendency to get over-enthusiastic and set themselves huge objectives or objectives which might be not very realistic at that moment. Try, together with the young person, to break those objectives down into smaller steps which are achievable.

Try to set objectives which can be reached within a short-term period.

It's nice and motivating to experience success. Long-term goals require a lot of patience. Also here, the principle applies: try to break down the long-term goals into smaller steps.

Describe the objectives as much as possible in positive terms.

'I want to stop acting stupidly when I meet a new person' focuses on the negative and doesn't give much assistance in trying out new behaviour. Statements in terms of competence enhancement are positive and motivating: 'When I meet a new person, I will start to ask questions to see what we have in common'.

Opt for objectives which match the young person's strengths.

Often it's better to further develop competences you already have than to start learning something completely new. When it's about something new it is important that it fits into, or links to, strengths you already have.

Objectives which can be achieved quickly should be in balance with objectives that require some effort from the young person.

When you have your learning plan, it's good to have some objectives you can reach quickly and others which require more effort.

Make sure the objectives are varied.

Learning objectives can be very different in their nature. They can be about knowledge, about skills and about attitudes. Because learning is about these three different elements, all of them should be present in the learning plan.

Celebration time

Encourage the young person to think about how she/he will celebrate when objectives are achieved. It's something to be proud of!

Check the learning objectives

Are they based on the learners' needs?	✓
Are they concrete and tangible?	✓
Can they be evaluated?	✓
Are they realistic and achievable?	✓
Can they be reached in a short amount of time?	✓
Are they described in positive terms?	✓
Do they match the learner's strengths?	✓
Is there a balance between short-term and long-term objectives?	✓
Are the objectives varied?	✓
How can you celebrate?	✓

B1. How to support learning

'So, now I have my group motivated to work on all kinds of different things. They choose to learn, they are enthusiastic about it and now I have to tell them about these Key competences. What do you want me to tell them? That the European Commission thinks it's much more important to learn this very pompous stuff? Do you think that will motivate them?'

When you read out the eight Key competences to a group of young people, you will probably not manage to get them very excited about it. But when you explain that the Key competences are meant to

- > *help put all the things they've learnt into a framework*
- > *and this framework will also help other people see and recognise what they have learnt ...*

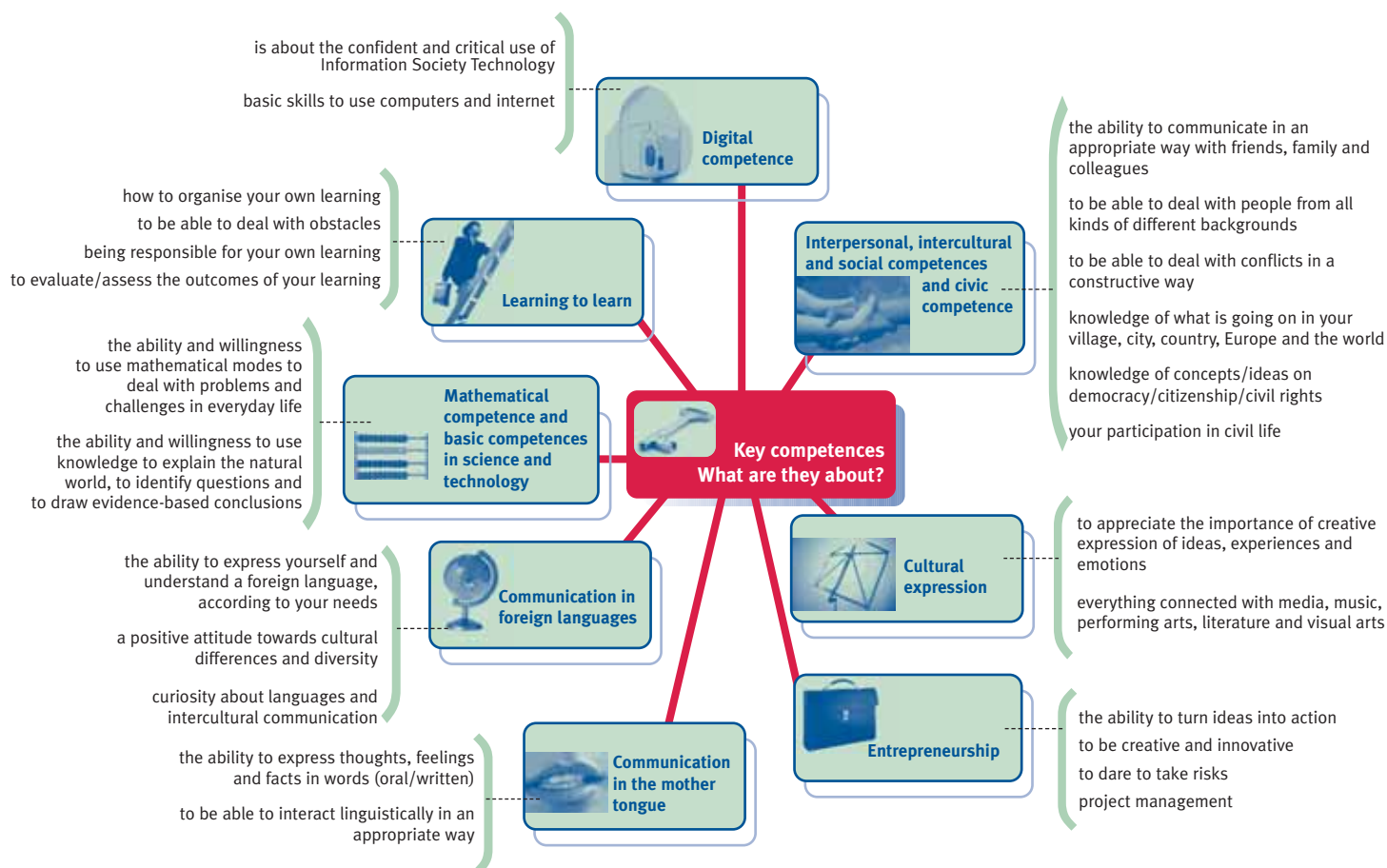
THEN they might start to like the idea!

In many situations, you will probably only introduce the Key competences after you have worked on learning objectives with your group, although in some situations, for example in

Training Courses for youth workers (Action 4.3), the Key competences can help participants to think about their learning objectives. But in general, it might be a better idea to see how the learning objectives of young people can fit into the Key competences.

Make sure participants understand that they don't have to use all the eight Key competences in one activity. In many Youth Exchanges and Training Courses, it may well be better to concentrate on only two or three of them. Try to connect what the young people want to learn with what is described in the Key competences and, in this way, you will be 'translating' them into a language which will be understood by your youngsters and is related to their world.

Don't make the Key competences sound complex and difficult. They have been developed as a tool to help people in structuring their learning outcomes and to help make these outcomes more widely recognised.



B1. How to support learning

Reflection and Assessment

As we pointed out before, the Youthpass process is designed to make the learning in projects more explicit. It means that the learner has to be aware of what he/she is learning and try to put into words what has been learnt. This is not something you only do at the end of a project. During the whole process, the learner needs time and space to see what has been learnt, what new questions have come up, what barriers have been discovered, whether he/she is still on track and if the plan has to be adjusted. And at a certain point it has to be decided whether you have managed to learn what you wanted to learn. You have to assess your learning. Reflection and assessment go hand in hand.

Reflecting on learning

Learning is not something that goes on in a continuous one-line process. There are good days and bad days. Sometimes you make a lot of progress, sometimes you have the feeling not much is happening.

The Swedish EVS volunteer who has the feeling that she will never be able to speak French. She has learnt all the words and all the grammar, but having a conversation is so difficult. Then one day she reads an article in a French newspaper and she understands it all! That same day, by coincidence, she meets a French guy in a café and she talks with him for one hour ... in French! What a day!

Or the young man who, (during a Youth Exchange) for the first time in his life manages to have a forty-minute talk with another guy about a fight they had the day before. It worked out, they resolved the conflict!

Or the participant in a Training Course on intercultural learning who, at some point in the evaluation of a simulation exercise, gets the exciting feeling that now 'she got it', she suddenly understands what kind of mechanisms play such an important role in intercultural communication.

These are good and inspiring moments. To turn them into conscious learning moments, it's important to reflect on them:

- > *which elements/factors made this learning successful?*
- > *how did I bring myself to this point?*
- > *how can I benefit from this in my further learning?*
- > *should I adjust my learning plan?*

By reflecting, the learner becomes more aware of the learning, of what has been learnt and how. Perceptions of this will probably change from time to time.

This not only applies to successful moments. During the process of learning many things can change:

- > *you might learn something which was not planned at all but that now you see as very important and valid*
- > *you find yourself behind your schedule*
- > *you find yourself going faster than you planned*
- > *in the process of learning, you find out that other questions come up and you want to add to your learning plan*
- > *there are unforeseen obstacles that you have to overcome*
- >

Constant reflection can help you to keep track, to adjust, to be aware of your success and to be motivated to go on.

Assessing my learning

Youth workers, mentors and trainers don't give marks to their participants. In non-formal education we don't usually work with tests and examinations to assess the results of learning. Since the learner is responsible for what, how and when he/she wants to learn, it seems logical that the learner should also decide when 'the job is done'. In other words: self-assessment.

When using 'part 2' of the Youthpass in Training Courses and EVS projects, self-assessment is the basic principle. The learner writes down what has been learnt.

Again, this is something very new for many people. Often, we are used to others deciding for us if we have succeeded or not. When these other people think you were successful, they give you a nice piece of paper and you're done. If they think you weren't, you have to try again.

But now you have to do this yourself. You are the boss! It is a challenging responsibility which, in many cases, needs help, assistance and support. To assess yourself, it's essential that, aside from individual reflection, you discuss things with colleagues, peers, mentors, youth workers, trainers, friends. ...

B1. How to support learning

Individual reflection

In a Youth Exchange, a Training Course or during an EVS project, many people feel a strong need to have some time for themselves, to be alone, not surrounded by all the others, a chance to deal with the many impressions they are confronted with. In a way it is a very natural need for reflection. As it's not always simple to plan and have that time for yourself, it can be good to offer space and tools in the programme to encourage participants to take individual reflection time.

Diary or Learning Journal

A diary or learning journal can be a simple and effective tool for giving participants the opportunity to reflect on the process they are going through and to note down the experiences of the day. It can be a good method to use, for example, in EVS-projects to help the volunteer reflect on the large number of experiences that she/he has to deal with. During Training Courses and Youth Exchanges this can also be a valuable tool. A diary is something for yourself, so people can use it in their own way: writing in their own language, doing it daily or once a week, having it with them all the time or at home under their pillow.

Just giving an empty notebook is one way, but it might help if you provide some structure by posing some leading questions like:

- > *Describe what happened today in your own words*
- > *Were there any memorable moments?*
- > *Are there things or questions still buzzing around in your head?*
- > *Is there anything 'new' you learnt today?*
- > *Is there anything you want to pay further attention to?*

Example

*Youth Exchange
'Message in a bottle'
Italy June 2008*

My Diary

Name:

What happened today?

Any special moments?

Still thinking about ...

You know what I learnt today!?

Something to keep in mind!

Tools for self-assessment

In 'educational' shops and on the internet you will find more and more tools that can help people assess themselves.

Hundreds of different tests on different sets of competences have been developed. You will find tests on 'leadership skills', 'communication skills', 'language skills' etc. Be aware that the quality of these tests is very variable. When you offer tests to participants, tell them that the outcome is not the 'whole truth'. It can help you to see some characteristics about yourself and to make you reflect on them.

A wide variety of card games is on the market, which aim to help people look at their competences. You will find sets of cards with a wide assortment of skills written on them. Using them, you can pick out the cards that describe your competences or the ones you want to develop. There are also card games that have a more creative approach and offer all kinds of images to help you to think about your strengths and weaknesses. And

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of course there are many other creative tools to help people reflect, based on images, drawings, collages, using objects, metaphors and different forms of non-verbal expression. These can be relevant here because they help get around language barriers and allow more freedom of expression on different issues and matters related to learning.

An individual talk

Regular individual talks with the young person can help her/him to keep on track, to discuss challenges and to look at the learning process with the help of another pair of eyes. In an EVS project, this kind of talk between volunteer and mentor is often already common practice. In the preparation, running and evaluation of a Youth Exchange or in a Training Course, this kind of talk can also be of great value.

Some tips for individual talks:

- > **Let the other person talk.** Ask open questions – they start with phrases like: “How much do you ...?” or “When will you ...?”. By asking open questions and letting the youngster speak freely, you offer them the chance to think aloud about what he/she is going through.
- > **Listen with empathy.** This means that you imagine the other’s situation and experiences. Ask for facts as well as feelings.
- > Try to help put some **order into the information** you get from the young person. Every so often, young people can lose themselves in too many and sometimes irrelevant details. Ordering and summarising helps them to think in a structured way and to focus on the core issues.
- > **Give positive feedback** on the results that have already been achieved by the young person, make change explicit. Many people have the tendency to focus on things that don’t go well. To show the young person her/his own success works as a strong motivating factor.
- > **Stimulate and support** the young person’s sense of self-responsibility. There is always the risk in talks like this that you (the mentor, youth worker, counsellor) come up with solutions. Let the young person find his/her own way.

Learning with others

One of the main characteristics of non-formal education is that you learn together and from each other. Youth workers, youth leaders and trainers are there, not to teach, so much as to facilitate the learning process. Facilitation means, amongst other things, creating an atmosphere where people can learn, encouraging people and offering tools and methods for working together.

Group dynamics

Bringing a group of people together does not automatically produce a good learning environment. Certain kinds of group dynamics stimulate learning more than others. You could even say that when certain conditions are not there in a group, learning becomes almost impossible. Although groups develop in all kinds of different ways and you cannot dictate what is going to happen, it can be helpful to distinguish the kind of group dynamics which help people learn. For the facilitator, the task is to help the group develop in that direction.

Positive signs for a ‘learning group’:

- > Participants are allowed to be themselves. There is no group pressure to act and behave in one certain way. Different forms of expression are respected and valued.
- > Participants are allowed to make mistakes. Learning often means making mistakes. That can make you vulnerable. You don’t want to be ridiculed.
- > The group takes care of its own process. Participants are able to talk about the development of the group and take care of the wellbeing of individual members.
- > Different forms of expression are used. Participants express themselves not only in words but also by other creative means such as movement, music and drawing/painting.
- > Critical questions are appreciated. Participants can deal with and appreciate it when others ask critical questions. It’s not seen as a threat but as inspiring.
- > An interactive working atmosphere. Participants share tasks, work in different combinations, give feedback and support each other.

Group Reflection

In a Youth Exchange or Training Course, a common evaluation and reflection on the experiences at the end of the day can help individual participants a lot in structuring their own thoughts or clearing up their confusion. By hearing the thoughts and opinions of others, you might gain new

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ideas yourself or you might gain confirmation or find recognition of your own feelings and experiences. There are all kinds of different methods of group evaluation and reflection. You can find many of them in:

- > *the SALTO CD ROM on Evaluation, downloadable from www.salto-youth.net/Evaluation*
- > *and in the T-Kit on Evaluation (nr.10) downloadable from www.youth-partnership.net*

Big groups are at a disadvantage when it comes to having an open and safe space for sharing thoughts. One method often used in Training Courses and Youth Exchanges is the Reflection Group. At the end of every day, participants come together in the same small groups (4 -7 participants) to reflect on that day. The advantage of the fixed group is that it allows the members to create their own atmosphere during successive days. As well as this, the small group offers, in general, a safer environment.

Reflection Groups are used for different kinds of purposes. They allow participants to blow off steam, they give youth workers or trainers the opportunity to keep track of what is going on in the group, they allow participants to express their wishes and ideas for the programme and they are an opportunity to share experiences. Another aim can be to give participants space to support each other's learning by:

- > *sharing what they have learnt*
- > *giving feedback*
- > *supporting each other*

The same topics described above as guiding questions for the diary could help structure such a conversation in a Reflection Group.

Peer pairs and groups

One way of organising mutual support in, for example, a Training Course can be to make peer pairs. Every participant is connected to one of his/her peers and during the course they meet regularly to talk about their learning achievements and challenges. They know each other's learning objectives and reflect together on the process, exchange their experiences and support each other. Often it's much easier for participants to search for support from a peer than ask a trainer.

In some situations, it might be better to have small groups of three or four people in a peer group. The disadvantage of a pair might be that people just have one other person to deal with.

It might be good to spend some time on topics such as 'active listening', 'asking good questions' or 'feedback' to prepare people to use their peer groups effectively.

Feedback

One way of benefiting from others around you is to ask them for feedback. Of course you know yourself best. But still, the image that you have of yourself is limited. It can be very helpful to get impressions from others of how they experience you and what competences they think you have.

Feedback is meant to be helpful for the person who receives it. In other words: if you are totally fed up with someone and you finally have the guts to tell him or her everything you think he/she does completely wrong ... you might feel very relieved but it is not very helpful for the person you are addressing. So: no feedback.

To be helpful, feedback to somebody must be given in such a way that the other person:

- > *understands the information*
- > *is able to accept the information*
- > *is able to do something with the information*

When you want to use feedback in a group it's important to explain what feedback is about.

You might often hear discussions about giving positive as well as negative feedback. When it's about learning, feedback is always positive, meaning constructive, because it aims to bring positive change and development.

Just telling somebody what you see as very positive aspects about that person can be very helpful. Often we are not used to telling someone what we see as their good qualities. That information might be very new and helpful to that person; it gives him or her a more complete picture of themselves. As well as this, you might have tips for someone on how to improve certain aspects about themselves.

'I like your creative and enthusiastic new ideas in our group. They often give me new energy and motivate me. For me, it would be even better if you took some more time to introduce your ideas.'

In simple words: feedback is about making the other person more aware of her/his qualities and giving them suggestions on how to improve.

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Feedback can be used amongst peers, in small groups or teams and in individual talks, for instance between a youth worker and youngster.

Some tips you might give to your group when introducing feedback:

When you give feedback:

- > Try to tell the other person about **concrete**, specific behaviour you see and what effect that behaviour has on you ('your ideas motivate me', 'the enthusiastic way you speak sometimes makes me confused').
- > Don't start sentences with 'you are' or 'you always'. You can only **tell the effect** that the other's behaviour has on you.
- > Be **action-oriented**, give concrete tips ('sometimes you make me confused and I think that if you took more time to explain your ideas, it would help me').
- > Be aware that a certain **tension** is involved in feedback.
- > When your feedback produces **emotional and defensive reactions**, it is best to stop and try and find out what the reasons for such reactions are.
- > Feedback works better when it's given **shortly after an activity** where you have seen the other in action.
- > Feedback should be given after it has been **asked for**.
- > Feedback should be based on empathy and respect.
- > Be sure you have **enough time**.

When you receive feedback:

- > Listen carefully and actively.
- > Ask questions for clarification.
- > Try to repeat in your own words what you've heard to check you understand things correctly.
- > It's good to get feedback from more people and/or to check with others about what you've heard.
- > Don't overreact to feedback but decide for yourself what is useful for you.

Self-assessment using the Key competences

At the end of the EVS project and on the last day of the Training Course, the moment is there to note down your learning achievements in your Youthpass. Youthpass offers the framework of the eight Key competences. The challenge

will be how to put your learning outcomes into that framework. It's important to point out that not all the Key competences have to be used. In most cases, somebody will not have learnt all the eight Key competences during an EVS project or during a Training Course.

In a Training Course, it might be helpful for participants if trainers - while introducing the programme - link the different programme elements to the Key competences. In many Training Courses only two or three of the Key competences will be specifically addressed in the programme. Of course, it might be that participants also learn outside the programme. 'Communication in a foreign language' might not be an element in the course but a participant in an international Training Course might still make great progress in language skills and want to state this in their Youthpass.

Starting from the Key competences when assessing yourself might be difficult. Therefore, it might be better to only address them in the last step of the process.

Start collecting the learning achievements by using:

- > the initial learning objectives that were set at the beginning of the project
- > the notes made at the end of the day in, for example, the Diary
- > the results of a feedback session
- > an extra talk with your peer
- > an individual talk with the mentor or trainer
- > an overview of the Training Course programme or all the activities undertaken in the EVS project



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In an EVS project, it is recommended that you set aside an appropriate amount of time for the self-assessment. Filling in the self-assessment part of the Youthpass should be done together with the mentor who will have an important role to play, assisting the volunteer by asking the 'right' questions and offering tools that help structure all the experiences. Don't just start this on the last day in between saying goodbye and packing. It involves looking back over a long process in which many things happened. Try to plan different sessions with the volunteer involving:

- > *mapping the different stages and activities*
- > *looking at and assessing the initial learning objectives*
- > *looking at unplanned learning outcomes (it happens a lot that you learn things you didn't plan)*
- > *looking at problems and challenges and how the volunteer managed to deal with them*
- > *trying to formulate the learning outcomes*

Time is limited in a Training Course. The final self-assessment will probably take place on the last afternoon and the trainers will not have time to speak with all the participants individually. That's why clear instructions and tips are necessary to get participants to work on the Key competences:

- > *point out (again) what the main Key competences addressed in the Training Course are*
- > *recommend that they ask each other for support*
- > *give some examples of how to write down the learning achievements*
- > *give some ideas of how to start a sentence to describe learning outcomes*
- > *remind them that somebody else who reads it should be able to understand it*
- > *tell them there are many right ways to do this; the trick is to find the one that fits you best*

Some ideas for starting a sentence to describe your learning:

- > *I feel more comfortable now ...*
- > *I found out ...*
- > *I learnt ...*
- > *I feel confident ...*
- > *I made progress ...*
- > *I'm able to ...*
- > *I now know how ...*
- > *I developed ...*
- > *I have a clear view now ...*
- > *I want to explore further ...*

Facilitator of learning

As we said at the beginning of this chapter: young people also learnt a lot in Youth Exchanges, EVS projects, Training Courses and Youth Initiatives before the introduction of Youthpass. What Youthpass aims to add is an increased awareness for the learner of what she/he has learnt and the recognition of that learning by others. An important pre-condition for this is that the youth workers/leaders, mentors, and trainers who implement these projects are aware of the learning possibilities that the projects offer and are ready to take on their role as the facilitator of that learning process. How 'new' that role is will differ a lot from person to person depending on the background, country or field where he/she comes from.

In general, we can say that 'making learning explicit' is something new and challenging in the field of non-formal education. We are at the beginning of a process which could be exciting!

A process where there is still much to explore and new ideas, approaches, methods and tools are welcome and necessary.

The website of Youthpass will allow practitioners to share their experiences and ideas – let's use it!

B2

Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in Youth Exchanges

✦ Rita Bergstein

1 What is Youthpass in Youth Exchanges?

The simple answer is that Youthpass in Youth Exchanges is a Certificate which confirms the participation of a young person/a participant taking part in a Youth Exchange. It is also a Certificate that describes the activity as such and the involvement of the young person/participant. And the more sophisticated answer is that Youthpass and the linked political context offer recognition of non-formal learning within the Youth in Action Programme

And this is what Youthpass looks like:



In the following parts each section of the Youthpass Certificate will be explained.

B2. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in Youth Exchanges

1.1 Youthpass as confirmation of participation

Youthpass confirms participation of a young person taking part in a specific Youth Exchange. The first half of the first page includes the name of the participant, the date and town/country of birth and the basic details of the exchange.



European Commission

Education and Culture DG
"Youth in Action" Programme

Youthpass

for Youth Exchanges

Volker Schmitz
born on **07/05/1988** in **Bonn, Germany**

participated in

Ecological development in Europe,
a Youth Exchange with 24 young people
from Germany, United Kingdom, France and Estonia.

The activity took place from **10/07/2007**
to **20/07/2007** in **Manchester, United Kingdom.**

B2. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in Youth Exchanges

1.2 Description of activity

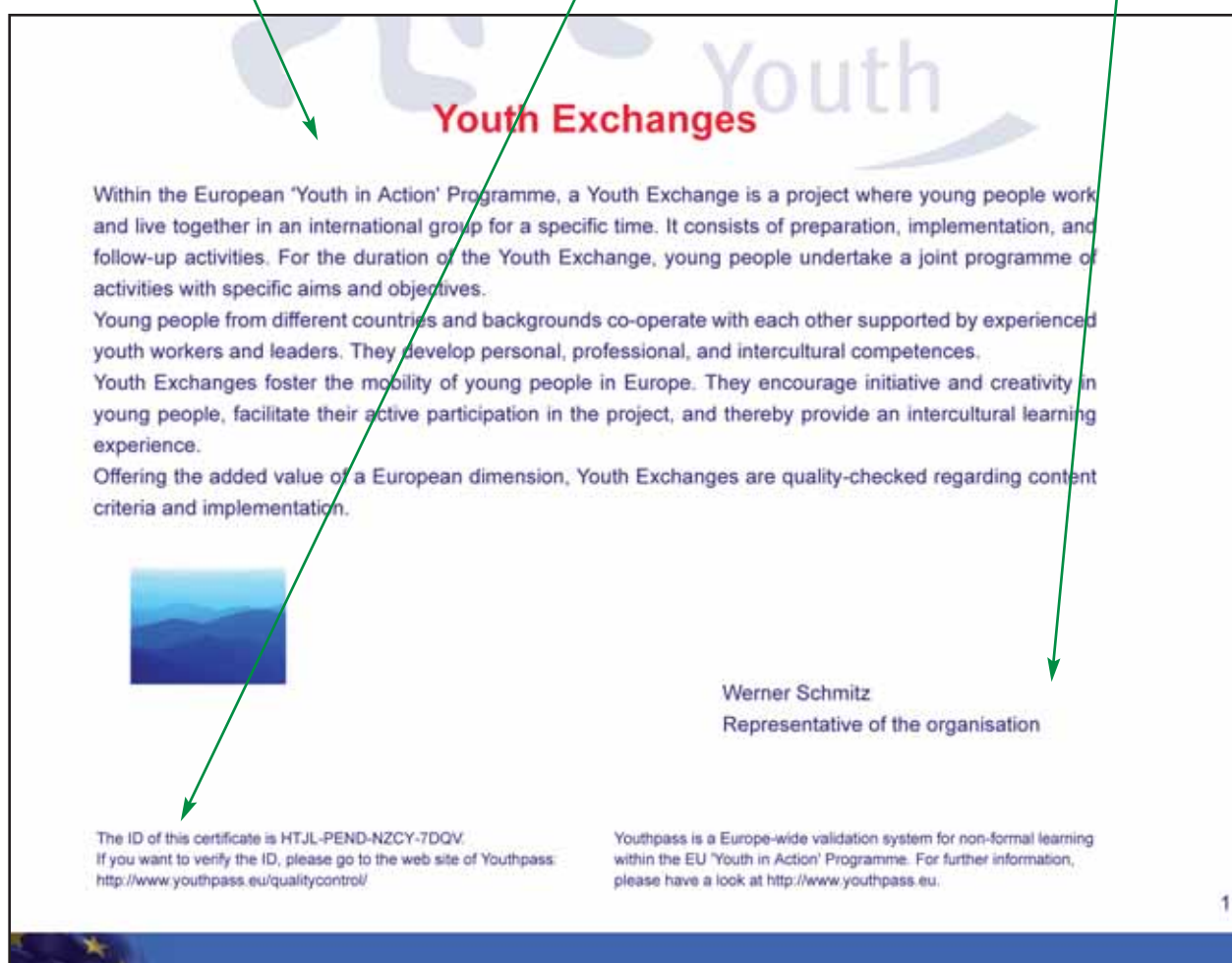
The next part of the document is a general description of what Youth Exchanges are, as described in the Programme Guide for Youth in Action.

This part provides essential information for people from outside the youth field as it explains the general idea of what a Youth Exchange is really about. This is necessary for situations where the participant who gets Youthpass shows it to someone who has never heard about Youth Exchanges in international youth work. It might also make you think about how you would describe such Exchanges to someone from outside the field in your own words ...

On this page Youthpass will be signed by a representative of the organisation – this could be a legal representative.

The structure of the first page of Youthpass ensures that relevant information about the Exchange is presented in a concise manner, which can be handy to use in support of a job application, for example.

All Youthpass Certificates are stored on a central database for security reasons and to help create a replacement Youthpass if someone loses theirs. Each Youthpass has a unique ID number at the bottom of the first page which will allow people to check whether the Certificate is genuine.



B2. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in Youth Exchanges

1.3 Individual description of activities undertaken

The second page of Youthpass for Youth Exchanges starts with a general description of what learning in Youth Exchanges is based on the Key competences for Lifelong Learning.

For further details and background about the Key competences please go to chapter A4 “You hold the keys to Lifelong Learning”.

With the second part you have an opportunity to describe your Youth Exchange in a few sentences including details of the preparation and follow-up.

→ To give you an example:

The project “Ecological development in Europe” includes preparation and follow-up: two day and two weekend meetings. The German group met, discussed the local ecological situation, and prepared a map of their city with regard to specific questions (waste and energy usage data, for example). During the Youth Exchange in Malta, the young people lived together with the common challenge of reducing their usage of water and energy. After returning home, they developed personal plans to look after their local environment.

In addition to the general description of your Youth Exchange you have an opportunity to describe individual activities undertaken by each participant. This is often the most important part for stakeholders who come from outside the youth field and read a Youthpass. They are usually interested in what a young person learned or achieved individually. Based on the idea that most of you work with young people on a long-term basis it will be possible for you to point out important aspects.



B2. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in Youth Exchanges

→ To give you an example:

Volker Schmitz was involved in activities investigating the ecological system in the local environment (e.g. how is waste dealt with, what kind of nature protection activities exist?). After comparing the different approaches of the countries represented, a discussion about the influences on ecological development followed. Volker took part in developing a practical guide on influences on the environment at local level. He showed particular initiative in preparing and writing the practical guide.

In addition to this part, you have an opportunity to list the partners you co-operated with and the co-funders (if you have co-funding, of course!).

Apart from the general description on page 2, the inclusion of all other parts is optional. For example, if you have nothing relevant to describe about a particular young person and you do not fill in this section, it will not appear on Youthpass.

You can generate Youthpass on a specific website. And this is how it works when you organise an approved project:

- > Together with the contract for your approved project, you will get a link to the Youthpass website www.youthpass.eu
- > You are obliged to inform all participants that they are individually entitled to get a Youthpass.
- > On the Youthpass website you need to register before you can start using the Youthpass generating tool.
- > Help texts will guide you through the different steps.
- > You can easily create Youthpass Certificates by filling in the different boxes online with information about your project and participants. Once all information is there, you can generate the Certificates in pdf for Acrobat Reader and print them.



Further technical details you will find on the website www.youthpass.eu.

B2. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in Youth Exchanges

2 Why Youthpass in Youth Exchanges?

Now you have some ideas of what Youthpass in a Youth Exchange is about and what the document looks like. You can now ask, and maybe a lot of people will ask you,:

- > *What is the benefit/potential of using Youthpass in Youth Exchanges?*
- > *Why is Youthpass meaningful for participants?*
- > *Why does it make sense for organisations?*

There are several answers to this depending on your perspective.

For **young people** Youthpass is an opportunity to demonstrate their active participation in a project officially. They can use it when they apply for a job or further education or training. But for young people it also means - and this is even more important - recognising their participation in a project and emphasising their ability to learn and develop.

e.g. If you develop a Youth Exchange with a group of young people, they prepare a lot of the programme elements, they are active in the activity and take on certain responsibilities. So it is relatively easy to imagine what it could mean to them when issuing their Youthpass, perhaps even in a short ceremony at the end of the Exchange. The idea behind Youthpass is also to reflect on the personal learning process with them during the activity and to focus on learning potential.

Youthpass offers an opportunity to document the learning which happens in Youth Exchanges, which shows the commitment and active participation of young people. Especially for the target group of young people who have not managed to finish their formal learning path and who are sometimes referred to as “early school leavers”, “school drop outs”, “disadvantaged youngsters” etc. it will be exciting to see if a Youthpass Certificate can make a

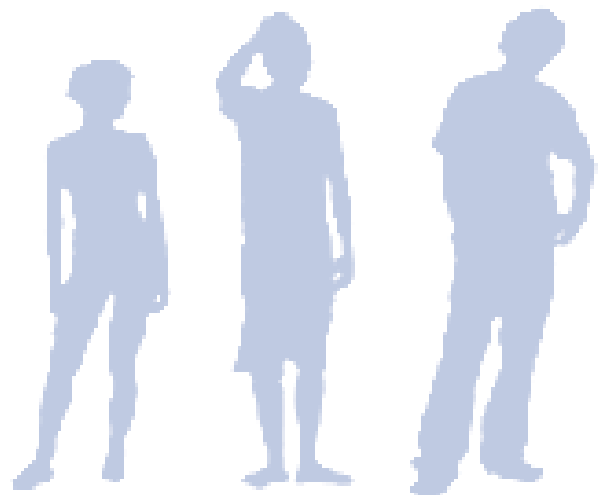
difference when applying for the next step in their lives. Experiences with Youthpass will be documented in a “good practice” part of the website. If you want to share your experiences and support others through communicating them, please use it!

For further ideas and support on how to use Youthpass, please have a look at chapter B1 “How to support learning”.

For youth workers/leaders, for people who are responsible for the Youth Exchange and their organisations Youthpass is one way of using a Europe-wide system for validation and recognition of their youth work. The Youthpass Certificates also show that you organised an activity which was quality-checked by the National Agency of the Youth in Action Programme in your country and financially supported by the European Commission.

If you use the educational recommendations concerning the learning process, objectives and outcomes described in this Youthpass Guide, you can increase the educational impact and quality of your youth work.

Youthpass highlights the added value in terms of learning experienced in a Youth in Action activity – as you can read about further in chapter A5 “Youthpass - more than a certificate of participation”.



B2. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in Youth Exchanges

3 How can Youthpass be used in a Youth Exchange?

“Youthpass is more than just a piece of paper and more than just the cream on top”. This is the intention of those who were part of the development of Youthpass. But what could it look like, how can you use it from the first moment you hear of Youthpass to the very last moment when you finalise the Youth Exchange?

Have a look at this flow chart of a typical Youth Exchange:

Initial ideas for an Exchange



Consolidation of a group of participants



First setting of aims and objectives and thinking about possible partners abroad



Contact with partner organisation(s)



Deciding with project partners about main aims and objectives; types of activities needed



Organising the necessary logistics: travel; accommodation; etc



Running the Exchange



Evaluation and follow-up

B2. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in Youth Exchanges

Youthpass fits into the flow of a Youth Exchange at several moments and milestones during the activities, as you can see from the following example of relevant questions which could be used at each stage:

Initial ideas for an Exchange



Consolidation of a group of participants
- what do you want to get out of the Exchange?



First setting of aims and objectives and thinking about possible partners abroad
- how and what do you want to learn in the Exchange?



Contact with partner organisation(s)



Deciding with project partners about main aims and objectives; types of activities needed
- sharing ideas about learning goals and how to implement Youthpass



Organising the necessary logistics: travel; accommodation; etc.
- what did we learn in taking responsibilities here?



Running the Exchange
- how do we share our learning with each other?
- when do we organise reflection groups?
- what activities was I involved in?
- issuing Youthpass



Evaluation and follow-up
- what are our future learning goals?
- how will we use our Youthpass Certificates?

B2. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in Youth Exchanges

And now you are invited to read an example which might open your mind up to ideas about how you can adapt this or use it in your own way with your own educational approach:

1. If you start to plan your activity you can integrate Youthpass right from the beginning when planning and setting learning objectives for the Youth Exchange. You can think about the learning potential for individual participants and how to encourage this process. If you are dealing with future topics like working life, active participation in society, active European citizenship, ecological developments etc. you can think about encouraging reflection processes with young people.
2. When your project is approved through your National Agency of the Youth in Action Programme you will get a contract and information letter. There you will find a short explanation of Youthpass and a link to the website: <http://www.youthpass.eu>. You need to register here in order to generate Youthpass Certificates.
3. When you plan the Youth Exchange
 - > *you should inform all participants that they are individually entitled to receive a Youthpass Certificate. It is your contractual obligation as an organiser to inform participants about the possibility of receiving Youthpass and to offer it if requested,*
 - > *you can include questions on learning opportunities and personal development in the sessions when you reflect on the ongoing processes within the Exchange,*
 - > *you can include a session on learning and future concepts of learning with a link to Lifelong Learning – chapter B1 “How to support learning” gives a lot of ideas to help with this.*
4. Before you can generate the Certificates you should fill in all the information which is relevant to the activity. Most of the steps can be prepared in advance except the individual part about the achievements and participation of each young person – you will only know this at the end

of the Exchange. You could reserve some time during the Exchange to have a short conversation with the participants or you could decide to do this later and complete the Certificates with some distance from the Exchange.

5. Concerning the generating of Youthpass: You need time to fill in the website before Youthpass can be generated. You can prepare it in advance and the first page can be signed by a legal/official representative of your organisation.

If you want to issue Youthpass on the spot e.g. during the farewell party, you should organise at least one computer with a printer and internet connection – because the Youthpass Certificates are generated using an online database.

There are very creative ways of setting up the technical facilities to prepare Youthpass during a course, e.g., using internet cafes, or asking organisations nearby to provide access to computers and the internet.

If you want to issue Youthpass at the end of the whole project – after the follow-up activity – you have time to prepare the Youthpass Certificate during the following weeks. It can be of great benefit to generate Youthpass Certificates later as the participants have a certain distance from their activity and a different perspective on their learning process.

You will find all relevant technical questions concerning the website, the technical conditions and procedures on www.youthpass.eu.

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B3

Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in European Voluntary Service

✦ Rita Bergstein

1 What is Youthpass in European Voluntary Service?

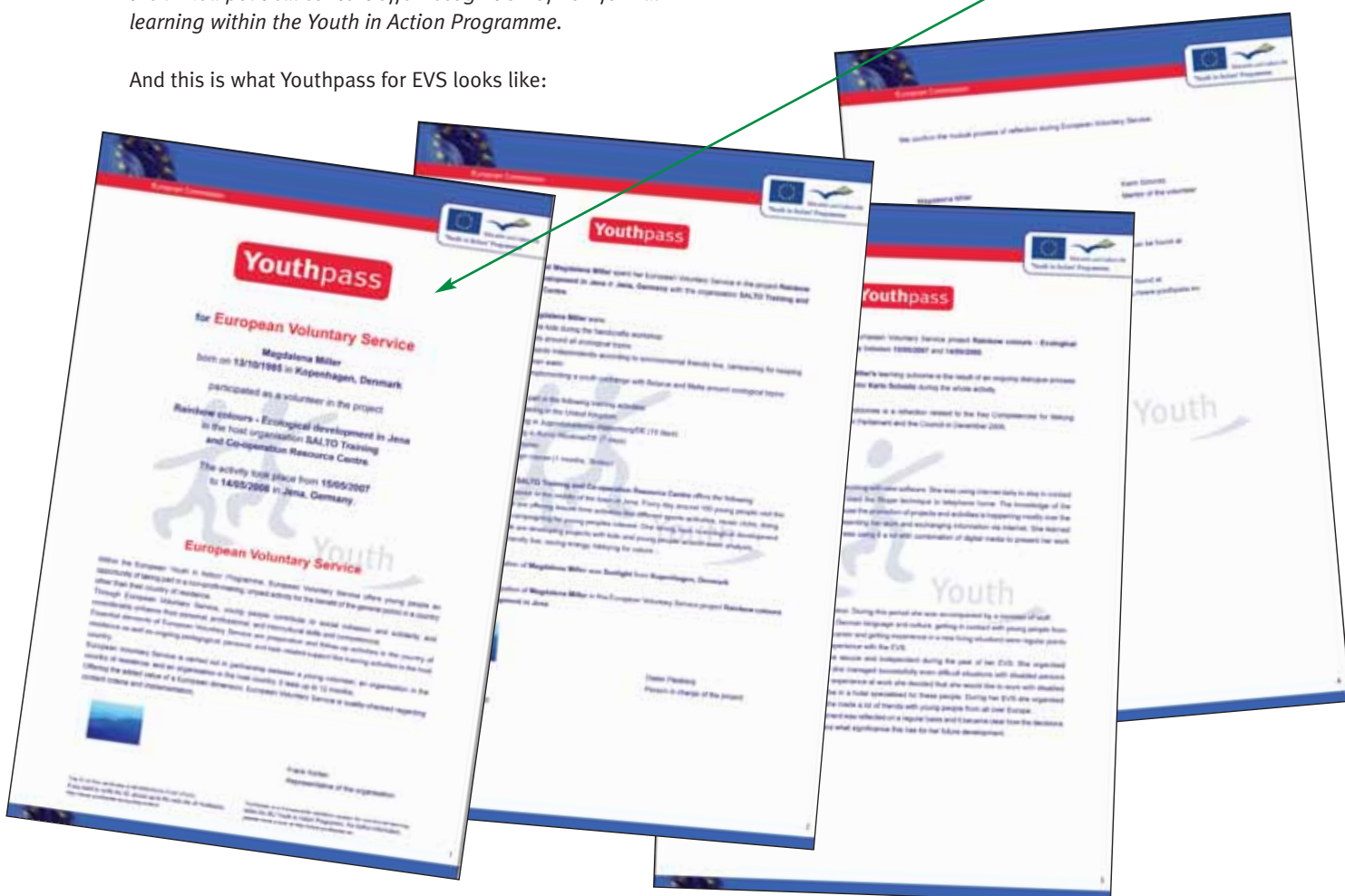
The simple answer is that Youthpass in European Voluntary Service (EVS) is a Certificate which confirms the participation of volunteers and describes their specific EVS project. It is also a Certificate that describes what volunteers learned during their project using the Key competences for Lifelong Learning as a framework.

And the more sophisticated answer is that Youthpass and the linked political context offer recognition of non-formal learning within the Youth in Action Programme.

And this is what Youthpass for EVS looks like:

1.1 Youthpass as confirmation of participation

Youthpass confirms participation of the volunteer taking part in a European Voluntary Service activity. The first half of the first page includes the name of the participant, the date and town and country of birth and the basic details of the EVS project, which are: project title and the duration of the project presented as an activity date.



In the following parts, each section of the Youthpass Certificate will be explained.

B3. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in European Voluntary Service

1.2 Description of European Voluntary Service

The next part of the document is a general description of what European Voluntary Service is, based on the Programme Guide of the Youth in Action Programme.

This helps people from outside the youth field to understand what European Voluntary Service is really about. This description is necessary when showing Youthpass to people who have never heard of EVS or other voluntary services in international youth work.

It might also make you think about how you would describe EVS to someone from outside the field...

The first page of Youthpass is to be signed by a representative of the organisation.

The structure of the first page of Youthpass ensures that relevant information about European Voluntary Service is presented in a short way, which can be handy to use in support of a job application, for example.

All Youthpass Certificates are stored on a central database for security reasons and to allow the creation of a replacement Youthpass if someone loses theirs. Each Youthpass has a unique ID number on the bottom of the first page which will allow people to check if the Certificate is genuine.

Youth
European Voluntary Service

Within the European 'Youth in Action' Programme, European Voluntary Service offers young people an opportunity of taking part in a non-profit-making, unpaid activity for the benefit of the general public in a country other than their country of residence.

Through European Voluntary Service, young people contribute to social cohesion and solidarity and considerably enhance their personal, professional, and intercultural skills and competences.

Essential elements of European Voluntary Service are preparation and follow-up activities in the country of residence as well as ongoing pedagogical, personal, and task-related support like training activities in the host country.

European Voluntary Service is carried out in partnership between a young volunteer, an organisation in the country of residence, and an organisation in the host country. It lasts up to 12 months.

Offering the added value of a European dimension, European Voluntary Service is quality-checked regarding content criteria and implementation.



Frank Kürten
Representative of the organisation

The ID of this certificate is NEWW-85G5-YD5P-ESZD.
If you want to verify the ID, please go to the web site of Youthpass:
<http://www.youthpass.eu/qualitycontrol/>

Youthpass is a Europe-wide validation system for non-formal learning within the EU 'Youth in Action' Programme. For further information, please have a look at <http://www.youthpass.eu>.

1

B3. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in European Voluntary Service

1.3 Individual description of activities undertaken

The second page of Youthpass for European Voluntary Service starts with a description of the role and tasks of the volunteer in the host organisation, followed by an outline of the host organisation.

In this part, the Youthpass Certificate provides information to make the setting of the EVS project easier to understand. It describes the training activities undertaken by the volunteer. Besides pre-departure, on-arrival training and mid-term meetings, you can also add language courses or other courses on practical or other relevant topics (e.g. sent by the host organisation to participate in other national or international training courses).

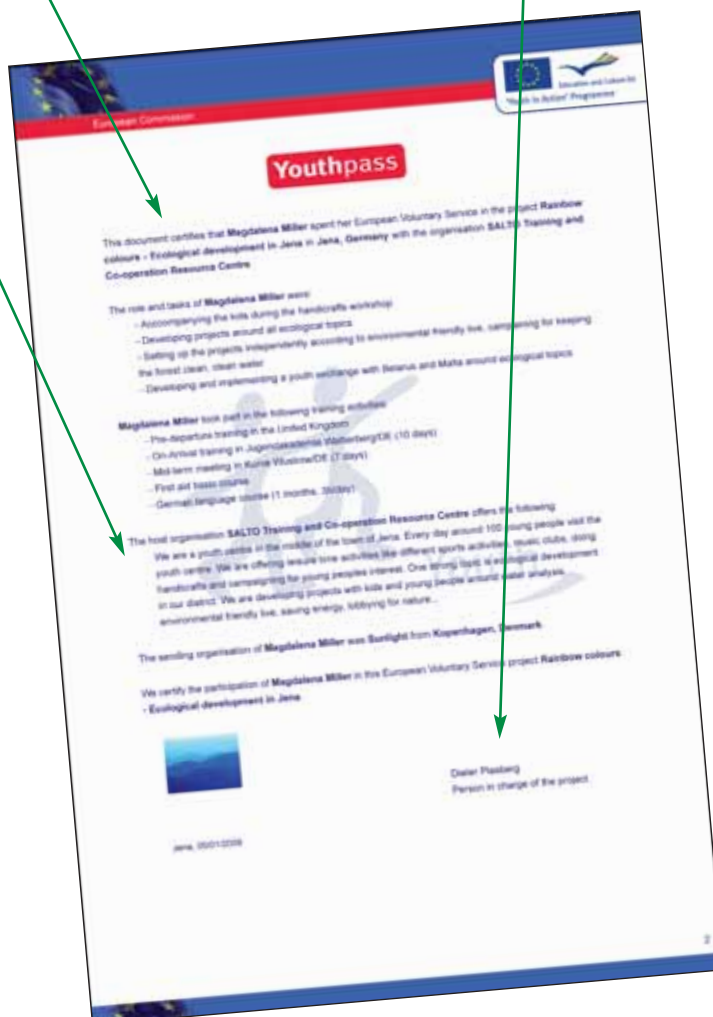
The EVS project takes place in a foreign country where different types of organisations and working cultures exist, which people from outside the field or from another country might not initially understand.

It is important to name the sending organisation – in particular if the EVS volunteer uses Youthpass to demonstrate acquired competences in their home country e.g. when applying for a job in the local area. The sending organisation could give further credibility.

This page will be signed again by a representative – it could be the legal representative, the mentor or the co-ordinator of the project; preferably, of course, someone who knows the project very well.

All the above information is limited to two pages. Therefore there are a limited number of characters for each of these parts in the online certificate generation tool. We have found that a two-page Certificate is more readily accepted by people from outside the field. Also, some people prefer to use these two first pages separately from the part describing the personal learning outcomes, depending on the context in which they want to use the Certificate.

As the number of pages is not limited, you will find just one page here for demonstration purposes.



B3. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in European Voluntary Service

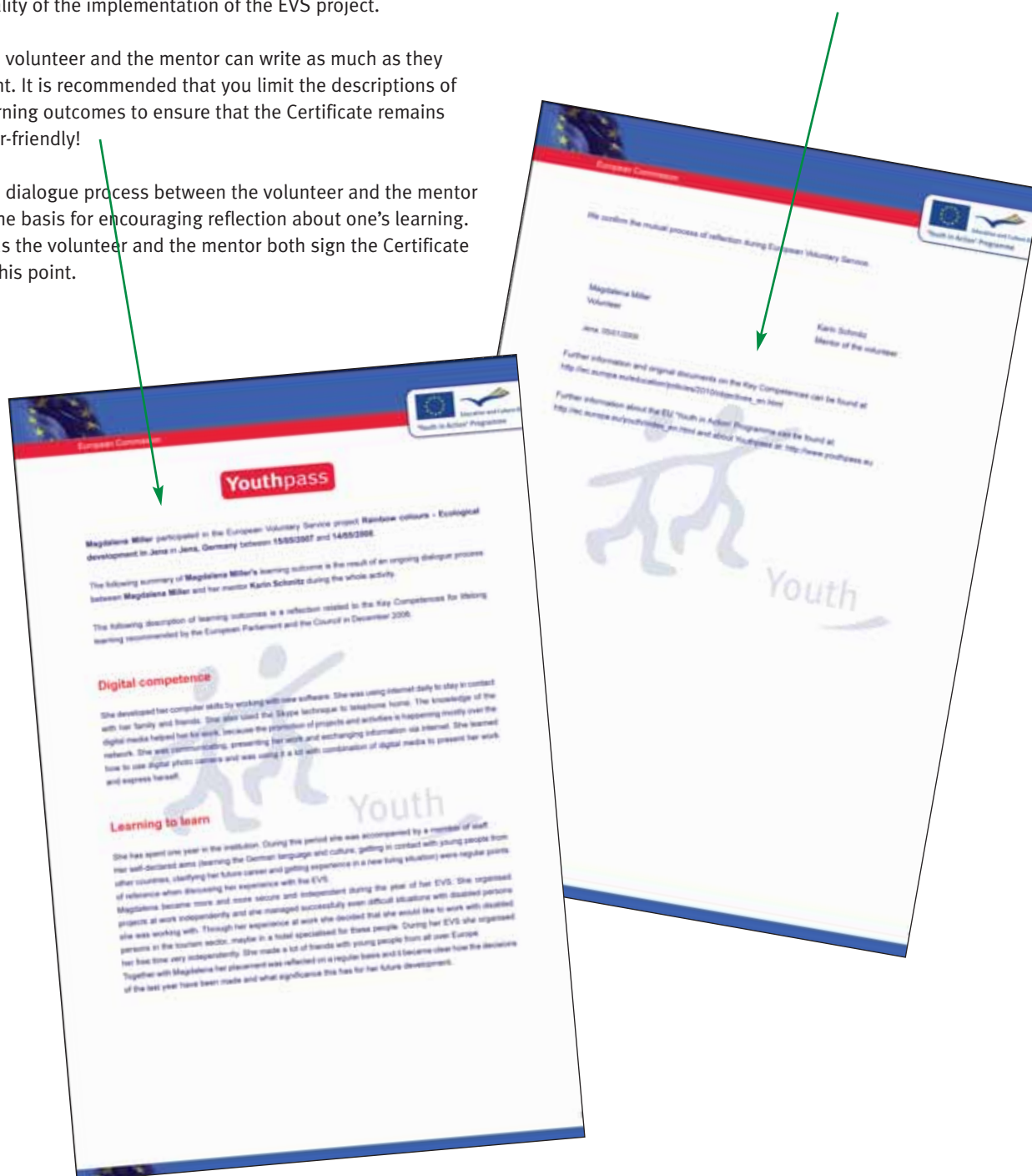
These two first pages of the Certificate are followed by an optional number of pages, in which the participant's learning outcomes are described using the Key competences. A short introduction highlights the joint dialogue process between the mentor and the volunteer which took place during the whole EVS period to deepen their reflection on the learning process and to ensure the quality of the implementation of the EVS project.

The volunteer and the mentor can write as much as they want. It is recommended that you limit the descriptions of learning outcomes to ensure that the Certificate remains user-friendly!

The dialogue process between the volunteer and the mentor is the basis for encouraging reflection about one's learning. Thus the volunteer and the mentor both sign the Certificate at this point.

Space is also provided to give further references – for example from another support person, or a language teacher – at the end of the Certificate.

At the bottom of the last page, you will find links to the Youth in Action Programme, to the Key competences and to the Youthpass website for further information.



B3. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in European Voluntary Service

You can find further information about Key competences

- > in A4 “You hold the keys to Lifelong Learning” (general information) and
- > specifically in European Voluntary Service further in this chapter.

1.4 Quick summary of how to generate certificates

Compulsory fields to complete on the website to produce Youthpass Certificates:

On the first page: name of the participant; gender; date of birth; the EVS project details (title, dates, venue); who will sign the first page

On the second page: role and tasks of the volunteer; host organisation's offer; the sending organisation; the training activities; who will sign the second page

On the following pages relating to Key competences and learning outcomes, all fields are optional – if there is no entry in a particular field, it does not appear on the Certificate.

You can generate the Youthpass Certificates easily on the Youthpass website. This is how it works when your European Voluntary Service project is approved:

- > Together with the contract for the approved project, you will get the link to the Youthpass website www.youthpass.eu
- > You are obliged to inform volunteers that they are individually entitled to receive a Youthpass.
- > We recommend including information about Youthpass and the Key competences as soon as you set up the planning for the EVS project together with volunteers, sending and host organisations.
- > On the Youthpass website you need to register before you can start using the Youthpass generating tool.
- > Help texts will guide you through the different steps.
- > You can easily create a Youthpass Certificate by filling the different fields online with information about the EVS project and the volunteer. Once all information is there you can generate the Certificate in PDF and print it.
- > If you type in the learning outcomes along with the Key competences, please do not forget to save the text every now and then to avoid data loss.

Further technical details you will find on the website www.youthpass.eu.



B3. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in European Voluntary Service

2 Why Youthpass for European Voluntary Service?

Now you have some idea of what Youthpass in European Voluntary Service is about and what the document looks like. But what is the benefit/potential of using Youthpass in European Voluntary Service? Why is Youthpass meaningful for volunteers? Why does it make sense for organisations? There are several answers to these questions depending on your perspective.

For **volunteers** Youthpass is the official proof of their active participation in a European Voluntary Service project. They can use it as a reference when they apply, for instance, for a job or an educational course. But a Youthpass also means - more importantly - recognising their own active participation in a project, their mobility experience and emphasising their ability to learn from this intercultural experience and to develop personally and professionally.

When volunteers leave their home countries to go abroad and spend a period of their lifetime in a foreign country, they have to cope with a lot of new things; they have to survive in a new environment and put ideas into practice. This will influence their future perceptions of life, culture, work and vision of reality and their view of European societies. Youthpass is an opportunity to reflect on and describe this experience gained in an EVS project. This experience contains a lot of personal growth and enormous learning potential.

Youthpass offers an opportunity to document the learning which happens in European Voluntary Service. Next to that it demonstrates commitment and active participation within a European context. Especially for those young people who have not managed to finish their formal education, a Youthpass Certificate could make a difference when applying for the next step in their lives. In any case, Youthpass can easily form part of a young person's portfolio.

Volunteers have to decide for themselves if they want to show all of the Youthpass pages to others. Sometimes it will be more effective to use just the first and second pages to

show that they participated actively in an organisation abroad for a period of their lives. On other occasions it will be equally appropriate to present the learning outcomes within the 'Key competences' framework (page three and following).

Experiences with Youthpass will be documented in a so-called 'good practice' part of the Youthpass website in the near future. If you want to share your experiences and support with others, please feel free to share them!

For the **organisers of the European Voluntary Service project (organisations, mentors)**, Youthpass is a fantastic opportunity to use a Europe-wide system for validation and recognition of their work.

The Youthpass Certificate also shows that you organised an activity which was quality checked by the National Agency of the Youth in Action Programme in your country or by the Executive Agency of the European Commission - if you implement a Centralised project supported by the European Commission directly.

If you use the educational recommendations concerning the learning process, objectives and outcomes described in this Youthpass guide, you can increase the educational impact and quality of your youth work.

Youthpass highlights the added value in terms of the learning experienced in a Youth in Action activity - as you can read about further in chapter A5 "Youthpass - more than a certificate of participation".

In the next part you will find more information about how you can implement Youthpass in an EVS project.

B3. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in European Voluntary Service

3 How can Youthpass be used in a European Voluntary Service project?

“Youthpass is more than a piece of paper and more than just cream on top.” This is the intention of all those who were part of the development of Youthpass.

Now we will look at how to put this into practice - from the first moment you hear of Youthpass to the very last moment when you complete a European Voluntary Service project.

We invite you to go through the following steps which might give you some inspiration on how you can adapt or use the Youthpass process in your EVS project:

1. When you start to plan hosting/sending volunteers you can integrate Youthpass and the Key competences right from the beginning when planning and setting learning objectives for the European Voluntary Service project – both for the volunteer and for your organisation. You can choose which competences you would like to address, the learning potential for the individual volunteer and your organisation and how to encourage this process.

If you are dealing with topics like active participation in society, active European citizenship or specific topics like intercultural learning, ecological development, the situation of socially excluded people in different countries etc. you can think about encouraging a specific reflection process for volunteers and for your organisation.

2. When you plan the structure of the European Voluntary Service project, please reserve time:

- to inform volunteers that they have the right to receive Youthpass if they want. It is the contractual obligation of an organiser to provide a Youthpass Certificate if requested,
- to include questions on learning and personal and professional development for the volunteers and participating organisations during the ‘reflection moments’ of the EVS project,
- to start thinking already about the use of Key competences and use the descriptions presented later in this chapter,
- to plan regular reflection sessions and possible tools to support volunteers to reflect on their learning objectives,
- to think about different approaches to motivate volunteers in their learning and to link this to Lifelong and Lifewide Learning – please use the ideas about this contained in chapter B 1 “How to support learning”.

3. The self-assessment parts and the dialogue process you create with volunteers need time. Setting up a process which offers an opportunity for deep reflection needs a relationship of trust. A lot of volunteers are not familiar with this approach to thinking about learning and you may need to offer guidance and methodological support.

4. Motivate volunteers to create networks and partnerships with others to deepen their reflection and to make it a real learning experience. Motivate them to use the on-arrival training and mid-term meetings to receive feedback and develop their reflection on learning objectives and on how to reach them in different ways. Again, you will find support in chapter B1 “How to support learning”.

5. During one of the last meetings between volunteers and mentors it is recommended that you invite volunteers to reflect on their learning objectives and the outcomes of the EVS project as a whole and describe them using the ‘Key competences’ framework. Use the reflection process as well to reflect on the mentor’s work and support and the learning experience as a mentor or for the organisation. Volunteers provide a good point of view from outside.

6. Before generating and printing the Youthpass Certificates at the end of the EVS project, it is necessary to fill in all the information related to the European Voluntary Service activity. Most of the steps can be prepared in advance – except the individual part about the volunteer’s learning outcome.

7. There should be enough time reserved to find the best description. This could be developed in different steps during the final weeks of the EVS project. As support, one could use the adaptation which is offered on the website – in the tool itself – or it can be printed before.

8. There is no need for volunteers to choose every Key competence. They can just pick those which are related to relevant learning outcomes. The others will not appear on the Certificate if there is nothing typed in the particular fields.

9. Remember that there is also a field for other specific skills which allows you to highlight specific learning e.g. practical, job related skills.

10. The description of the learning outcomes can be prepared offline in an electronic format. This allows copying and pasting information online into the Youthpass generating tool.

11. For individual recognition purposes ask the legal representative of the organisation to sign the Youthpass Certificate after generating the full document. Maybe this can be linked with a little ceremony which provides recognition of the volunteer’s EVS project and the mentor’s commitment.

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Youthpass in European Voluntary Service

You will find all relevant technical questions concerning the website, the technical conditions and procedures in Chapter C.

4 Further aspects

Coordinating organisations

Coordinated projects use different ways of dealing with the Youthpass process: either the coordinator acts as a mentor and follows the volunteers' individual learning processes or he/she delegates the task to a mentor, who is selected by the hosting organisation. However it is organised, make sure that the best person to accompany volunteers through the Youthpass process follows their personal and professional learning. Anyway, the coordinator is responsible for finding the best solution.

How to deal with it technically when generating Youthpass Certificates will be explained on www.youthpass.eu.

Language of Youthpass in European Voluntary Service

Youthpass for European Voluntary Service will be filled in and generated in most cases in English for international mobility reasons. If the mentor and the volunteer need support to describe learning outcomes in English, please use any resource like dictionaries, support people with language abilities... It could also be very supportive to integrate the sending organisation in the translation process.

Youthpass might be used in a local environment where English will not be understood. If volunteers want to receive it in another language e.g. their mother tongue, this is possible. The technical tool is set up for as many languages as volunteers need. Of course there is a need to translate all text box fields.

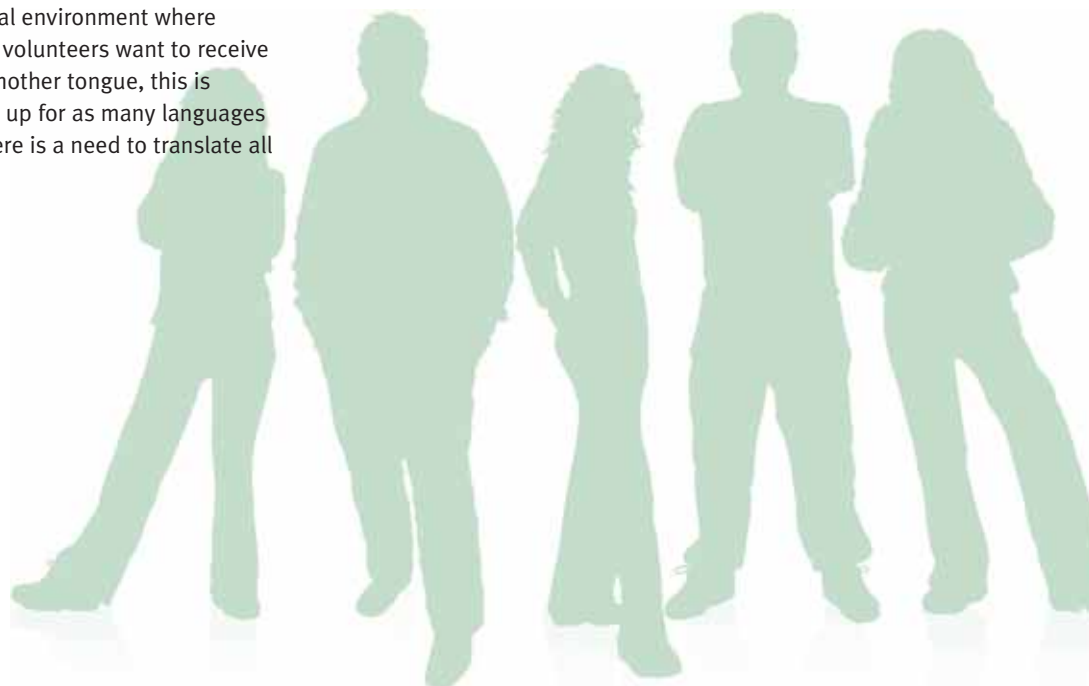
5 Key competences in European Voluntary Service

The following part provides assistance with understanding and using the Key competences during the dialogue process between the volunteer and the mentor to describe learning outcomes. You are encouraged to have a look at other sections of the Youthpass Guide (such as chapter B1 "How to support learning") which give further hints and ideas on facilitating the use of Youthpass in the Youth in Action Programme.

The background to the Key competences for Lifelong Learning

The European Union has defined basic Key competences for Lifelong Learning in Europe. All types of education can refer to this same framework, and so do we in the Youth in Action Programme. Competence is defined as being a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes.

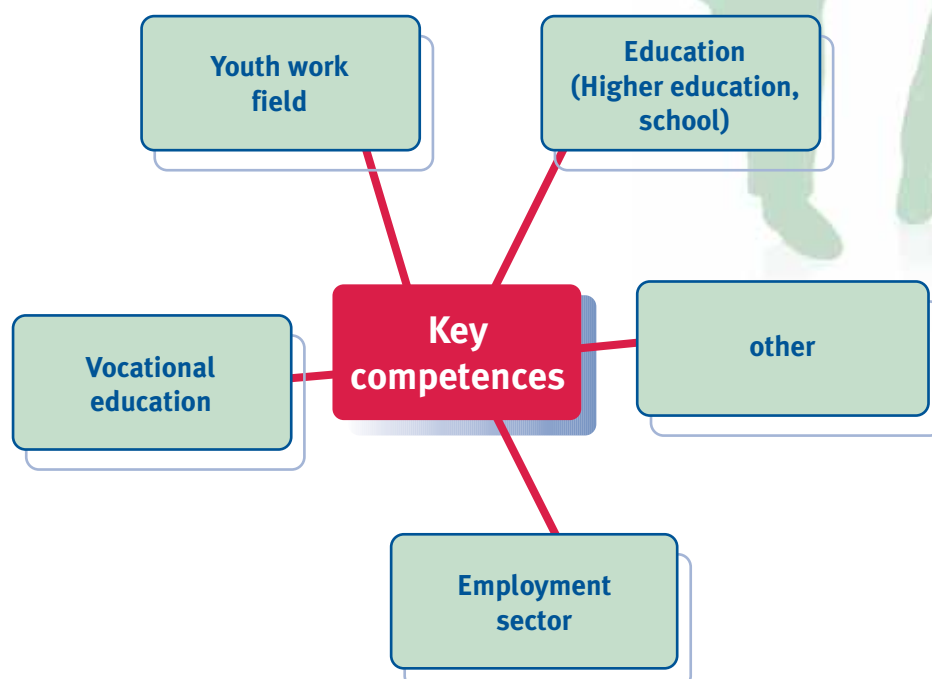
Have a look at Chapter A4 "You hold the keys to Lifelong Learning" for a detailed explanation of the development of the framework.



B3. Youthpass in practice*Youthpass in European Voluntary Service***Key competences in the Youth in Action Programme**

Using Key competences as a tool to describe the learning outcomes from experiences gained within the Youth in Action Programme is new. The decision to go down this path is part of an overall strategy to support young people in their personal lifelong and life-wide learning process and to promote the recognition of youth work in the wider society and its importance in political priorities. One part of the Lifelong Learning strategy is the focus on employability but the other part – which is as important and closer to what we know as youth work - is the future life of young people and coping with the challenges that come from changes in societies. With Youthpass, both aspects will be highlighted.

This common European Key competences framework helps us in using a more coherent European language to talk about learning experiences across different environments.



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Youthpass in European Voluntary Service

Below you will find the European definition of the Key competences, and what they might look like in European Voluntary Service. It will hopefully give you some ideas on how you can describe learning outcomes.

You are invited to use the 'Key competences' terminology when describing the learning outcomes of EVS. This offers guidelines on how to focus on a common European approach and on how to start using a more coherent European language to report and present these experiences, including in different environments. Especially in view of the Youth in Action Programme, the use of the Key competences here is intended to improve the quality of EVS projects in supporting multipliers in their work.

Each of the Key competences is described below in the following way:

- 1) an extract from the original wording of the Key competences, and
- 2) suggestions on how to reflect on this competence in the context of EVS

One approach to creating a link between learning outcomes in EVS and the Key competences could be:

1. *List all general competences (knowledge, skills, attitudes) gained by your EVS volunteer on a large sheet of paper in three columns.*
2. *Now cut out each single competence from the large paper.*
3. *Prepare 8 large sheets of paper with headings of different Key competences.*
4. *Now stick the general competences that you cut out earlier on the respective 'Key competence' paper. Find out where they fit the best.*

This can give you and the volunteers a more practical understanding of how to link learning outcome in EVS with the concept of Key competences.

Of course you can try another approach, taking the Key competences right from the beginning of the reflection process and thinking about the learning outcomes while being inspired by them.

For some of you, and especially volunteers, it may be a relatively new exercise to jump into a dialogue using self-assessment. You may find it useful to offer some examples of half sentences which you can use when describing learning outcomes and competence development. Here are some examples taken from B1 "How to support learning". If you describe it as continuous text you can either use "I" or "He/She" or the name of the volunteer. It depends on the preference you choose with the volunteer.

1. *I/He/Linda feel/s more comfortable now...*
2. *I/He/Linda found out ...*
3. *I/He/Linda learned ...*
4. *I/He/Linda feel/s confident ...*
5. *I/He/Linda made progress ...*
6. *I'm/He is/Linda is able to ...*
7. *I/He/Linda know/s now how ...*
8. *I/He/Linda developed...*
9. *I/He/Linda have/has a clear view now ...*
10. *In future I/he/Linda want/s to develop further ...*

B3. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in European Voluntary Service



Communication in the mother tongue

The original wording of the Key competence

Communication in the mother tongue is the ability to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form (listening, speaking, reading and writing), and to interact linguistically in an appropriate and creative way in a full range of societal and cultural contexts; in education and training, work, home and leisure.

Suggestions for use in the context of EVS

Most of the volunteers in the Youth in Action Programme use a language other than their mother tongue to express themselves. During the EVS project the volunteers live and work in an environment where using their mother tongue is usually not possible in daily life. Being confronted with learning a new language makes one think about the use of the mother tongue. Being in touch with friends and family from the home country shows the quality of understanding in daily life in that country. It also shows the need to learn

another language to feel more at home through using the guest country's language. Some volunteers might offer language courses in their mother tongue while others will be hosted in a country where people speak the same mother tongue as them.

Questions which can help the volunteer to reflect are:

- > *What difficulties did I experience in communicating? How did I overcome those difficulties?*
- > *What opportunities did I have to use my mother tongue? How well did others understand me?*
- > *To what extent did I develop my communication skills in general? In what way?*
- > *How did I adapt my language to the level of the people I was speaking to? Did I make other people feel OK about not speaking perfectly what was - for them - a foreign language?*



B3. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in European Voluntary Service



Communication in foreign languages

The original wording of the Key competence

Communication in foreign languages broadly shares the main skill dimensions as communication in the mother tongue: it is based on the ability to understand, express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in an appropriate range of societal and cultural contexts (in education and training, work, home and leisure) according to one's wants or needs. Communication in foreign languages also calls for skills such as mediation and intercultural understanding. An individual's level of proficiency will vary between the four dimensions (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and between the different languages, and according to that individual's social and cultural background, environment, needs and/or interests.

Suggestions for use in the context of EVS

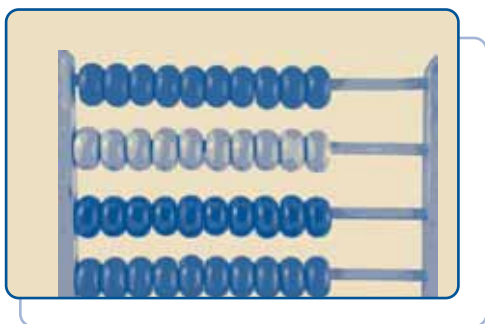
Communication is an important element of an EVS project. Regular exchanges of information and learning outcomes take place between the sending organisation, the host organisation and the volunteer. All participating parties develop the necessary abilities to deal successfully with one another. For the volunteers this means acquainting themselves with a new language, expressing their interests and needs in a foreign language. During the EVS project the volunteers live and work in an environment where they have to use a foreign language in daily life including expressing their feelings. Being confronted with learning a new language, makes one think about different concepts of language, terminology, systems and language codes in specific situations.

Questions which can help the volunteer to reflect are:

- > *How well did I use the host country's language?*
- > *What difficulties did I experience in communicating? How did I overcome those difficulties?*
- > *How creative was I in explaining things if I did not find the correct word?*
- > *Did I also have a go at writing?*
- > *Where did I identify most differences between my mother tongue and the newly learned language (language codes, different concepts, terminology)?*
- > *Did I learn something in terms of my communication style (active listening, different use of language in different contexts...)?*
- > *Did I learn something about cultural aspects of communication in the host country (use of non-verbal communication, taking turns in the conversation and meetings, directness/indirectness of communication, explicit messages or reading between the lines)?*
- > *If applicable, how well did I use English as a common language in specific situations?*

B3. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in European Voluntary Service



Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology

The original wording of the Key competence

A. Mathematical competence is the ability to develop and apply mathematical thinking in order to solve a range of problems in everyday situations. Building on a sound mastery of numeracy, the emphasis is on process and activity, as well as knowledge. Mathematical competence involves, to different degrees, the ability and willingness to use mathematical modes of thought (logical and spatial thinking) and presentation (formulas, models, constructs, graphs, charts).

B. Competence in science refers to the ability and willingness to use the body of knowledge and methodology employed to explain the natural world, in order to identify questions and to draw evidence-based conclusions. Competence in technology is viewed as the application of that knowledge and methodology in response to perceived human wants or needs. Competence in science and technology involves an understanding of the changes caused by human activity and responsibility as an individual citizen.

Suggestions for use in the context of EVS

A. Mathematical competence: The interesting aspect of this area of competence for EVS is the challenge of solving the most diverse problems in projects and to draw logical conclusions of all kinds in certain situations. The quality of the solutions is then to be seen within the area of everyday practice and not within the formal 'logic' context. Strategic thinking can also be described under this area.

B. Competence in science: Volunteers in Voluntary Service have already learned scientific concepts and ideas due to their education as well as knowledge and training from their home country. In the new, and for them culturally different situation, these concepts are put to the test. This can lead to frustration, but can also contribute to increased knowledge as well as the ability to be able to solve problems. This covers technical background knowledge as well as social scientific approaches.

Questions which can help the volunteer to reflect are:

- > *When did I use my mathematical competence during the EVS project?*
- > *How did I solve problems/challenges related to the EVS project when I faced them? Which skills did I use and improve?*
- > *Could I use logical thinking in specific situations? How did I use them?*
- > *Did I (learn to) use strategic thinking when I developed parts of the project? How did I use it?*
- > *How did I deduce logical conclusions based on practical arguments/experiences (deductive approach)? And how did I test a 'theory' (theoretical approach) in practice (inductive approach)?*
- > *How did I (learn to) use technology available for specific parts during the EVS project – e.g. internet research, databases, Polaroids, digital cameras for reporting, Projectors/presentations, specific methods according to the topic involving 'objects' (material to work with on ecological development, movies for social topics...)?*

B3. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in European Voluntary Service



Digital competence

The original wording of the Key competence

Digital competence involves the confident and critical use of Information Society Technology (IST) for work, leisure and communication. It is underpinned by basic skills in ICT: the use of computers to retrieve, assess, store, produce, present and exchange information, and to communicate and participate in collaborative networks via the internet.

Suggestions for use in the context of EVS

During EVS, volunteers use or develop their skills in dealing with digital media. Depending on the volunteer's skills and background knowledge, this covers the fundamental competences of using internet and e-mail communication as well as the competence of creating and maintaining websites.

Questions which can help the volunteer to reflect are:

- > *What information sources did I use to prepare myself for the EVS project?*
- > *To what extent did I communicate with (the sending and) the host organisation using the internet before the EVS project?*
- > *Did I use communication technologies and communication during the EVS project? How and what did I learn?*
- > *To what extent did I communicate with my family, friends, or other volunteers during the time I spent in the host country?*
- > *What did I learn about computer use in other countries here?*
- > *How did I deal critically with knowledge available on the internet?*
- > *How did I learn to use online resources for my EVS project (websites, blogs, mailing lists, social networks like Facebook)?*



Learning to learn

The original wording of the Key competence

'Learning to learn' is the ability to pursue and persist in learning, to organise one's own learning, including through effective management of time and information, both individually and in groups. This competence includes awareness of one's learning process and needs, identifying available opportunities, and the ability to overcome

B3. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in European Voluntary Service

obstacles in order to learn successfully. This competence means gaining, processing and assimilating new knowledge and skills as well as seeking and making use of guidance. Learning to learn engages learners to build on prior learning and life experiences in order to use and apply knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts: at home, at work, in education and training. Motivation and confidence are crucial to an individual's competence.

Suggestions for use in the context of EVS

EVS is a learning experience which young people have in a country other than their own. It is a combination of non-formal (planned and intentional) learning, and informal (unplanned and spontaneous) learning. An important part of EVS is the conscious decision to leave the known environment and look for a new challenge. Learning takes place in the EVS project in the most diverse ways. Before their placement EVS volunteers set themselves goals which they pursue during their posting. Becoming independent, getting to know a new culture, very personal aims connected to a career search or personal further development are all mentioned time and again. These are some motives people are most aware of. The learning process itself is often undirected and coincidental. Through training and personal accompaniment it is frequently possible to reflect on learning experiences and to become more aware of the learning process. To raise this awareness and take responsibility for your own learning process could be a crucial 'learning to learn' step in EVS.

Questions which can help the volunteer to reflect are:

- > *What does learning mean to me in general? What are my experiences so far?*
- > *What are/were my learning goals within my EVS project? How did they change (if at all)? How will/Did I reach them?*
- > *How do I want to learn? How did I learn?*
- > *Which activities in the EVS project motivated me most in my learning?*
- > *Where did my skills and knowledge improve?*
- > *Which methods do I want to/did I use to evaluate what I learned?*
- > *Which learning style do I prefer: learning by doing, by reading and thinking, by observing? How did I experience new ways of learning due to limited communication?*
- > *How did I explore different ways of learning compared to learning in school and university?*
- > *Why is this learning important for the next stages in my life?*
- > *How will I use what I learned?*
- > *How did I deal with challenges in my learning process? How do I motivate myself to deal with obstacles and continue learning?*



B3. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in European Voluntary Service



Social and civic competence

The original wording of the Key competence

These include personal, interpersonal and intercultural competence and cover all forms of behaviour that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life, and particularly in increasingly diverse societies, and to resolve conflict where necessary. It is linked to personal and social well-being. An understanding of codes of conduct and customs in the different environments in which individuals operate is essential. Civic competence equips individuals to fully participate in civic life, based on knowledge of social and political concepts and structures and a commitment to active and democratic participation.

Suggestions for use in the context of EVS

EVS projects offer testing experiences, handling different challenges in a new country with a different language spoken in a special way. It always involves developing new social contacts and friendships and coping in an organisation and therefore in a work situation. Most of the organisations which use EVS placements are concerned in some way with social and political questions. This means the volunteers are often involved with fringe groups, special political questions or particular everyday problems. EVS makes a contribution to the development of European citizenship. Young Europeans spend a year of their lives in another European country and bring impetus and ideas to institutions and communities. They represent a bridge between organisations in different countries. They meet volunteers from different European countries in accompanying training to exchange experiences, to address key questions

and to enliven Europe. It is the aim of many host organisations to bring Europe to the institution and to concern themselves with current questions and topics. In this way volunteers are often the bearers of the European idea in an organisation. Many organisations use this chance to arrange events or new initiatives related to Europe.

Questions which can help the volunteer to reflect are:

Social and intercultural competence

- > *How did I make new friends? What went well? What did not develop well?*
- > *How did I identify different habits in the host community? How did I cope with them?*
- > *Did I take the initiative, go towards others, and support others?*
- > *When was I most successful in communicating with others here?*
- > *How did I present my own cultural background in the host community? How did I experience theirs?*
- > *What was my intercultural learning process during the EVS project?*
- > *How did I deal with the cultural shock (if I faced one)?*
- > *How did I deal with conflicts? How did I resolve them?*
- > *How did I improve my ability to work in a team?*
- > *Which other social competences did I develop during the year?*
- > *To what extent did I increase cultural self-awareness: being more aware of my own cultural values, norms and stereotypes and the effect of communication with foreigners?*
- > *To what extent did I develop intercultural sensitivity, flexibility and an enhanced understanding of difference?*

B3. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in European Voluntary Service

Civic competence

- > *How much was I actively involved in the EVS project?*
- > *Did I find out how to influence developments in the organisation/in the community? Did I use this knowledge?*
- > *When did I participate in decision-making within the EVS project?*
- > *How did I take into account different opinions? How did they change my view of my own country, of the host country, of European developments?*
- > *How did my knowledge of national and/or local/National/European policies and structures increase?*



Sense of Initiative and Entrepreneurship

The original wording of the Key competence

Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship refers to an individual's ability to turn ideas into action. It involves creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. This supports individuals, not only in their everyday lives at home and in society, but also in the workplace in being aware of the context of their work and being able to seize opportunities. It is a foundation for more specific skills and knowledge needed by those establishing or contributing to social or commercial activity. This should include awareness of ethical values and promote good governance.

Suggestions for use in the context of EVS

An EVS placement includes the management of an independent project. In this way organisations and volunteers have the chance to use the special situation of EVS to make additional suggestions or put ideas into practice. If a volunteer wishes, then the complete planning, preparation, management and evaluation is normally given over to them. It is possible to look at the creation of new projects and initiatives involving young people as a form of social entrepreneurship.

Questions which can help the volunteer to reflect are:

- > *Which tasks did I take up during the EVS project; did I propose things that I could put into practice – my 'own' project?*
- > *How did my understanding of the practice and principles of project management increase in the EVS project?*
- > *When did I take risks? And what did I learn in the process?*
- > *What chances did I take to express my creativity, to use new knowledge and skills gained during the EVS project?*
- > *How will I use the concepts of other working styles, cultures and innovation in future?*
- > *Did I see and seize opportunities for cooperation or networking in future? Make contacts that could be useful for my future – (job related, common projects, etc.)?*

B3. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in European Voluntary Service



Cultural awareness and expression

The original wording of the Key competence

Appreciation of the importance of the creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions in a range of media, including music, performing arts, literature, and the visual arts.

Suggestions for use in the context of EVS

Young people often develop creative forms of expression to make contact with others in a non-verbal way of communicating or to reflect on experiences. Either organisations offer an opportunity to develop cultural aspects during the EVS project or young people use this form of expression based on their own initiative. If this is the case, then examples can be supportive of the description. All forms of creativity and media can find their place in youth work.

Increasing cultural awareness can prepare the ground for effective intercultural learning. If volunteers reflect on different cultural traditions, behaviour in general or specific contexts, major learning steps can be made to become aware of differences and similarities. This can involve a major learning step towards cultural awareness and how to deal with new contexts. It can also serve to raise awareness about dealing with ambiguity.

Questions which can help the volunteer to reflect are:

- > *How willing was I to get involved in new forms of cultural experience?*
- > *When was I able to use different media and forms of expression (e.g. verbal, drawing, body...) to express myself in different situations?*
- > *Which skills did I improve?*
- > *Which differences and similarities did I identify between the host country's culture and my home culture?*
- > *Did I experience situations where I could not understand/deal with the host country's culture? How did I resolve this situation?*
- > *Did I increase my ability to cope with new situations?*
- > *Which major changes have I become aware of?*
- > *What does it mean for my life in future?*

Europass

Dealing with Youthpass in European Voluntary Service provides a major opportunity for young people to develop their self-reflection and their personal and professional learning. It may well be that volunteers would like to use this for their further professional career path. They will find it important to use the Europass Curriculum Vitae or the Europass Language Passport for their next steps in life.

They will find the Europass web site including further resources here: <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/>



B4

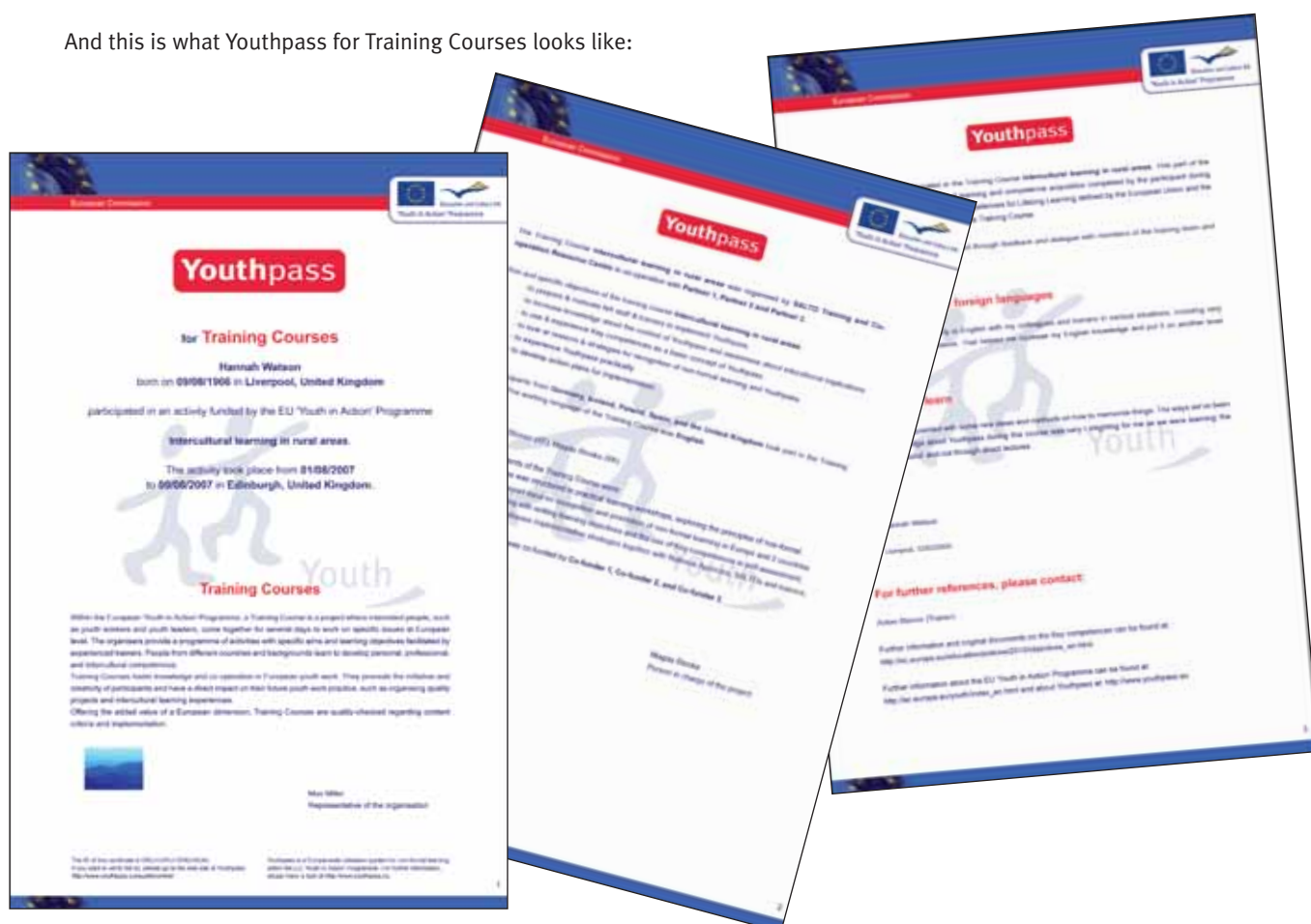
Youthpass in practice**Youthpass in Training Courses**

✦ Mark Taylor

1 What is Youthpass in Training Courses?

The simple answer is that Youthpass in Training Courses is a Certificate which describes the activity itself and confirms the participation of a youth worker/youth leader/multiplier in a Training Course. It is also a Certificate that has the option of being extended to include a summary of the participant's learning outcomes based on the Key competences for Lifelong Learning. Using an official Youthpass Certificate increases the recognition of the participant's learning and increases the social recognition of the Youth in Action Programme.

And this is what Youthpass for Training Courses looks like:



In the following parts each section of the Youthpass Certificate will be explained.

B4. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in Training Courses

1.1 Youthpass as confirmation of participation

Youthpass confirms participation of the youth worker/youth leader/multiplier in a Training Course. The first half of the first page includes the name of the individual participant, the date and town/country of birth and the basic details of the course (title, dates, venue).



European Commission

Education and Culture DG
"Youth in Action" Programme

Youthpass

for Training Courses

Hannah Watson
born on **09/08/1966** in **Liverpool, United Kingdom**

participated in an activity funded by the EU "Youth in Action" Programme

Intercultural learning in rural areas.

The activity took place from **01/08/2007**
to **09/08/2007** in **Edinburgh, United Kingdom.**

B4. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in Training Courses

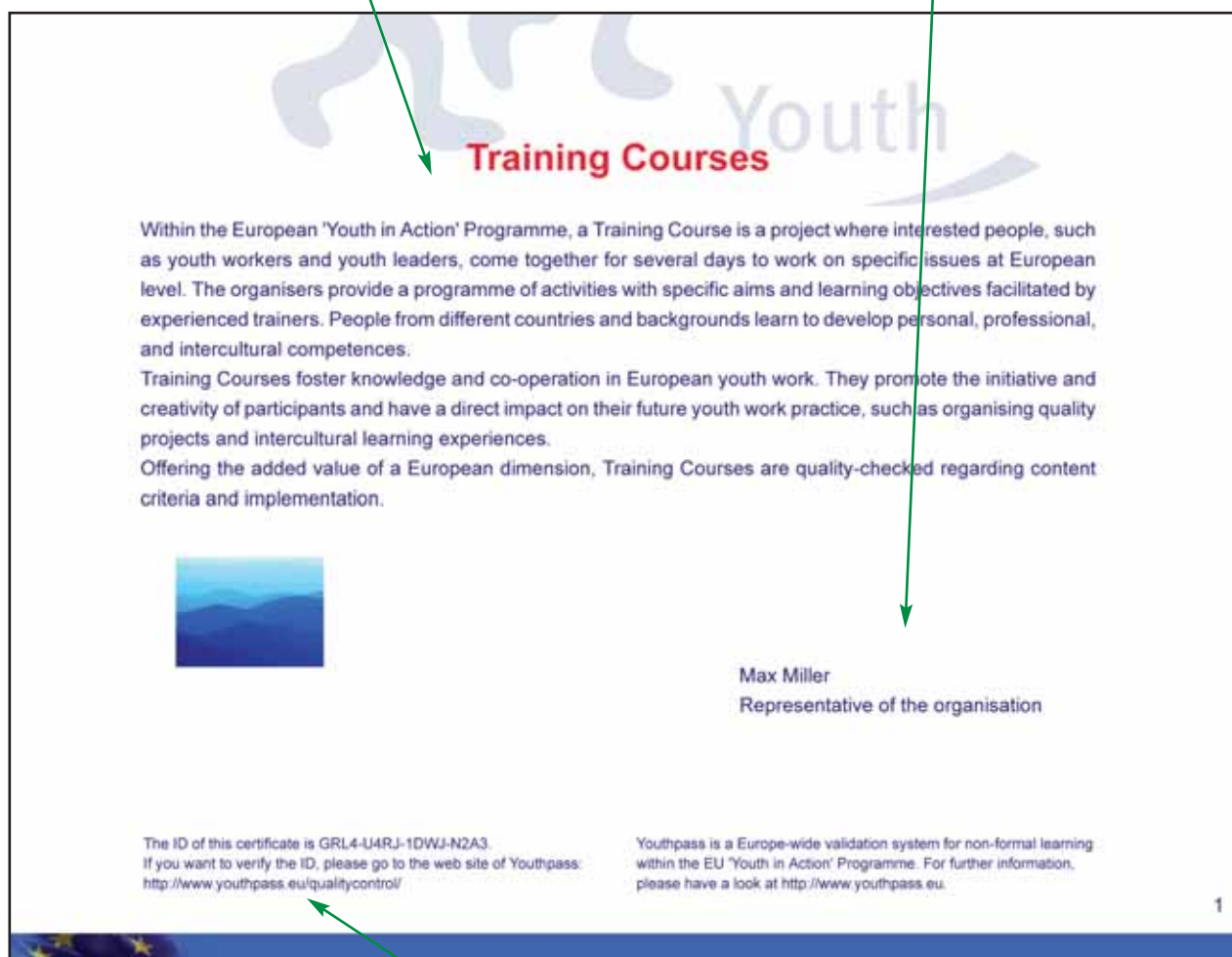
1.2 Description of activity

The next part on the document is a general description of what Training Courses are, based on the Programme Guide of Youth in Action.

This helps people from outside the youth field to understand what a Training Course is really about. This description is necessary when showing your Youthpass to people who have never heard of training courses in international youth work. It might also make you think about how you would describe such courses to someone from outside the field in your own words...

The first page of Youthpass is to be signed by a representative of the organisation – this could be a legal representative.

The structure of the first page of Youthpass ensures that relevant information about the Course is presented in a concise manner, which can be handy to use in support of a job application, for example.



All Youthpass Certificates are stored on a central database for security reasons and to allow the creation of a replacement Youthpass if someone loses theirs. Each Youthpass has a unique ID number on the bottom of the first page which will allow people to check if the certificate is genuine.

B4. Youthpass in practice

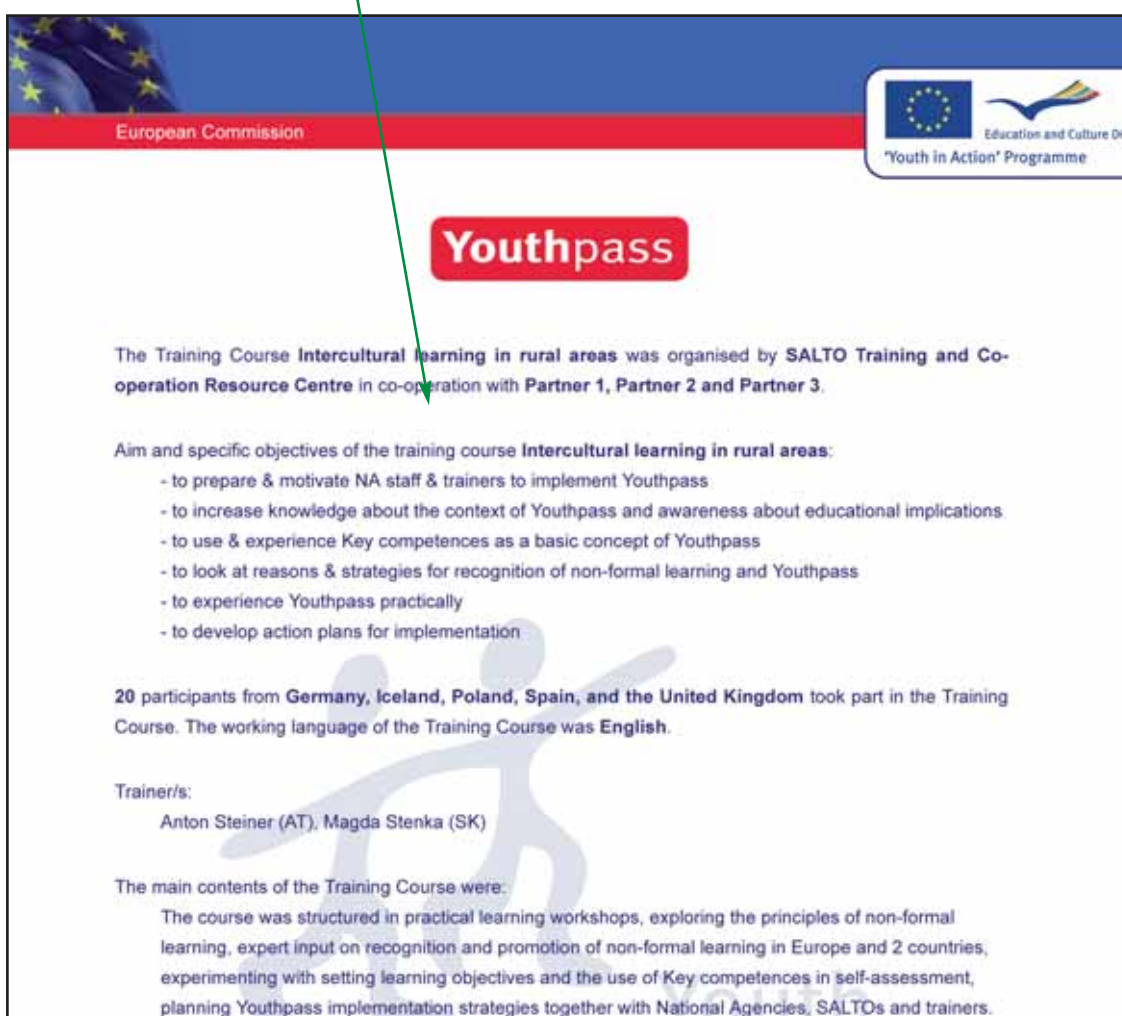
Youthpass in Training Courses

1.3 Individual description of activities undertaken

The second page of Youthpass for Training Courses starts with a summary of partner organisations that ran the Training Course together – if it was a joint project with other organisations – followed by a summary of the aims and objectives of the Training Course.

There is also the possibility of adding the number of participants who took part. This information could be relevant if the size of the group had an influence on the expected learning outcomes.

The countries which were represented by participants - together with a note about which working languages were used - show the international environment in which the learning took place.



European Commission

Education and Culture DG
'Youth in Action' Programme

Youthpass

The Training Course **Intercultural learning in rural areas** was organised by **SALTO Training and Co-operation Resource Centre** in co-operation with **Partner 1, Partner 2 and Partner 3**.

Aim and specific objectives of the training course Intercultural learning in rural areas:

- to prepare & motivate NA staff & trainers to implement Youthpass
- to increase knowledge about the context of Youthpass and awareness about educational implications
- to use & experience Key competences as a basic concept of Youthpass
- to look at reasons & strategies for recognition of non-formal learning and Youthpass
- to experience Youthpass practically
- to develop action plans for implementation

20 participants from Germany, Iceland, Poland, Spain, and the United Kingdom took part in the Training Course. The working language of the Training Course was **English**.

Trainer/s:
Anton Steiner (AT), Magda Stenka (SK)

The main contents of the Training Course were:
The course was structured in practical learning workshops, exploring the principles of non-formal learning, expert input on recognition and promotion of non-formal learning in Europe and 2 countries, experimenting with setting learning objectives and the use of Key competences in self-assessment, planning Youthpass implementation strategies together with National Agencies, SALTOs and trainers.

B4. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in Training Courses

It is possible to give additional information and references about the trainers who were responsible for the Training Course.

The next and last part of this page describes the different programme elements of the Training Course.

This page will be signed again by a representative – it could be the legal representative or the organiser of the Training Course.

All the above information is limited to two pages. Therefore there are a limited number of characters for each of these parts in the online Youthpass generation tool. We have found that a two-page certificate is more readily accepted by people from outside the youth field. Also, some people prefer to use these two first pages separately from the part describing the personal learning outcomes, depending on the context in which they want to use the Certificate.

These two first pages of the Certificate are followed by an optional number of pages, in which the participant's learning outcomes are described using the Key competences. After a short introduction to the Key competences, participants can add a summary of their learning outcomes, described in terms of the 'Key competences' framework. There is also space for participants to describe any further specific competences gained during the course. The number of pages in this part is not limited. Here you can see just one page for demonstration purposes.

The participants can write as much as they want, but it is recommended that you limit descriptions of learning outcomes to ensure that the Certificate remains user-friendly!

You can find further information about Key competences

> *in chapter A4 "You hold the keys to Lifelong Learning" (general information) and*

> *specifically in Training Courses further in this chapter.*

A dialogue process between the participant and fellow participants (and/or a trainer) is the basis for encouraging reflection about one's learning and the Key competences. If a member of the trainers' team wants to be part of this dialogue process, you need to foresee enough time for engaging in such a process. Space is also provided to give further references – for example, from a member of the trainers' team – at the end of the Certificate.

It is the participant who signs this part of Youthpass.

At the bottom of the last page, you find links to the Youth in Action programme and to the Key competences for further information.

European Commission

Youthpass

Hannah Watson participated in the Training Course *Intercultural learning in rural areas*. This part of the certificate is a self-assessment of learning and competence acquisition completed by the participant during the Course. It is based on the Key competences for Lifelong Learning defined by the European Union and the specific competences highlighted in the Training Course.

This self-assessment was enhanced through feedback and dialogue with members of the training team and other participants.

Communication in foreign languages

I've communicated regularly in English with my colleagues and trainers in various situations, including very complex scientific discussions. That helped me increase my English knowledge and put it on another level (experience-wise).

Learning to learn

I've become acquainted with some new ideas and methods on how to memorize things. The ways we've been getting knowledge about Youthpass during this course was very enlightening for me as we were learning 'the other way around' and not through direct lectures.

Youth

B4. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in Training Courses

1.4 Quick Summary

Compulsory fields to complete on the website to produce Youthpass Certificates for Training Courses are:

On the first page: name of the participant; the Training Course details (title, dates, venue); who will sign the first page

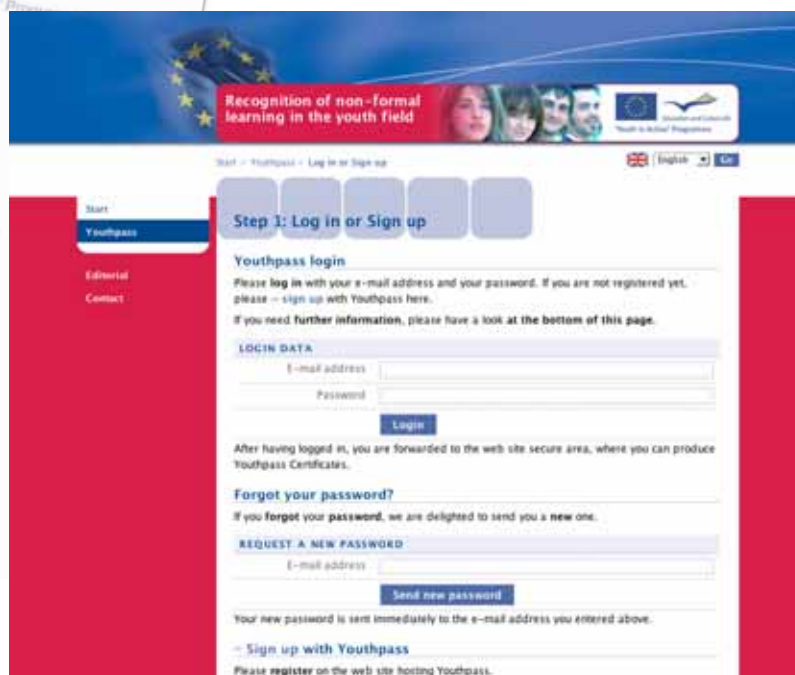
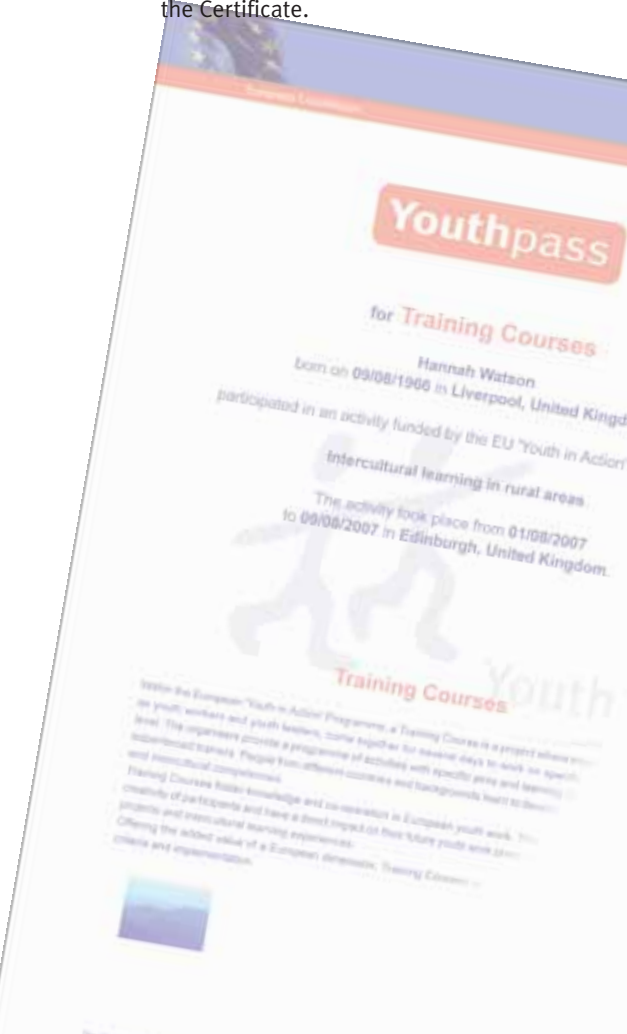
On the second page: aims and objectives; countries participants come from; the programme elements of the course; who will sign the second page

On the following pages relating to Key competences and learning outcomes, all fields are optional – if there is no entry in a particular field then that field does not appear on the Certificate.

You can generate the Youthpass Certificates easily on the Youthpass website. This is how it works when your Training Course is approved:

- > *Together with the contract for your approved project, you will get a link to the Youthpass website www.youthpass.eu*
- > *You are obliged to inform all participants that they are individually entitled to get a Youthpass.*
- > *We recommend including information about the Key competences in the preparation, implementation and follow-up of your Training Course.*
- > *On the Youthpass website you need to register before you can start using the Youthpass generating tool.*
- > *Help texts will guide you through the different steps.*
- > *You can easily create Youthpass Certificates by filling in the different boxes online with information about your project and participants. Once all information is there, you can generate the Certificates in PDF and print them.*

Further technical details you will find on the website www.youthpass.eu.



B4. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in Training Courses

2 Why Youthpass for Training Courses?

Now you have some ideas of what Youthpass in Training Courses is about and what the document looks like. You can now ask, and maybe a lot of people will ask you: What is the benefit/potential of using Youthpass in Training Courses? Why is Youthpass meaningful for participants? Why does it make sense for organisations? There are several answers to these questions depending on your perspective.

For **youth workers/leaders and other multipliers** Youthpass is the official proof of their active participation in a Course. They can use it as a reference when they apply, for instance, for a job or an educational course. But a Youthpass also means - more importantly - recognising their mobility experience and emphasising their ability to learn from this intercultural experience and to develop personally and professionally.

When a youth worker takes part in a Youth in Action Programme Training Course he/she will experience an international, intercultural environment often in a heterogeneous group. This will offer a lot of reflection points and new aspects for further engagement in his/her work field. Youthpass is an opportunity to describe this experience gained in a Training Course in a given framework for further use. The idea behind Youthpass is also for participants to reflect on the development of their personal learning in a dialogue process during the activity and to focus on learning potential.

Youthpass offers an opportunity to document the learning which happens in Training Courses, which also demonstrates commitment and active participation within a European context. Especially for the target group of youth workers/leaders and other multipliers who have not managed to finish their formal education, a Youthpass Certificate could well make a difference when applying for the next step in their lives. In any case, such a Certificate can easily form part of a youth worker/leader's portfolio as we shall see at the end of this chapter.

Participants have to decide for themselves if they want to show all of the Youthpass pages when presenting themselves to others. Sometimes it will be more effective to use just the first and second pages to show that they participated in a specific learning experience. On other occasions it will be equally appropriate to present the learning outcomes within the 'Key competences' framework (page three and following).

Experiences with Youthpass will be documented in a 'good practice' part of the website. If you want to share your experiences and support others through communicating them, please use it!

For the **organisers of Training Courses** Youthpass is a fantastic opportunity to use a Europe-wide system for validation and recognition of their work.

The Youthpass Certificates also show that you organised an activity which was quality-checked by the National Agency of the Youth in Action Programme in your country and financially supported by the European Commission.

If you use the educational recommendations concerning the learning process, objectives and outcomes described in this Youthpass Guide you can increase the educational impact and quality of your youth work.

Youthpass highlights the added value in terms of learning experienced in a Youth in Action activity – as you can read about further in chapter A5 "Youthpass - more than a certificate of participation".

In the next part you will find more information about how you can implement Youthpass in a Training Course.

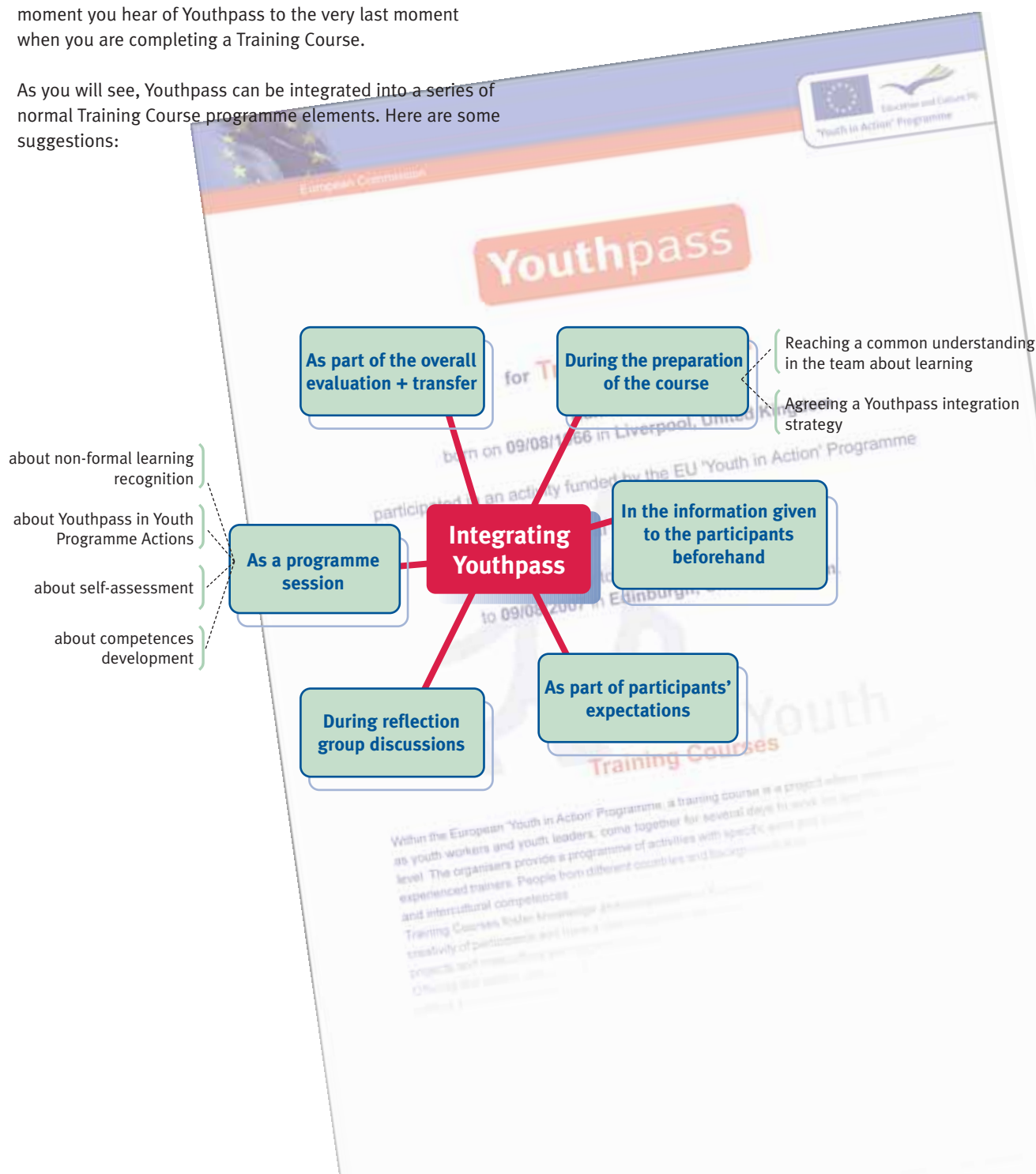
B4. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in Training Courses

3 How can Youthpass be used in a Training Course?

“Youthpass is more than a piece of paper and more than just the cream on top.” This is the intention of all those who were part of the development of Youthpass. Now we will look at how to put it into practice - from the first moment you hear of Youthpass to the very last moment when you are completing a Training Course.

As you will see, Youthpass can be integrated into a series of normal Training Course programme elements. Here are some suggestions:



B4. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in Training Courses

And now you are invited to read through the following steps which might give you some inspiration on how you can adapt or use it in your own Course:

1. When you start to plan your activity you can integrate Youthpass and the Key competences right from the beginning when planning and setting learning objectives for the Training Course – with a focus on both the participants and your organisation. You can choose which of the Key competences you would like to address the most or you can think about the learning potential of the individual participants or your organisation and how you can encourage this process. If you are dealing with topics like participation in society, active European citizenship and the influence of your engagement, intercultural learning, the impact of European developments on local youth work or on your organisation, specific topics like ecological developments, the social situation of young people, the situation of socially excluded people in different countries, etc. you can think about encouraging reflection processes for participants and organisations.
2. When you plan the Training Course structure, please reserve time:
 - > *to inform all participants that they have the right to ask for a Youthpass if they want. It is your contractual obligation as an organiser to provide a Youthpass Certificate if requested,*
 - > *to include questions on learning and personal development in the ‘reflection moments’ within the Training Course,*
 - > *to think about the acquisition of Key competences and use the descriptions presented later in this chapter,*
 - > *to plan regular reflection sessions to reflect on learning objectives and, through that, deepen the process of learning in the Course,*
 - > *to think about different approaches towards motivating participants in their learning and to link this to lifelong and life-wide learning – please use the ideas about this contained in chapter B 1 “How to support learning”.*
3. The self-assessment parts of the programme and the dialogue process you create during the Training Course need time. A lot of participants are not familiar with this kind of work and you may need to offer guidance and methodological support.
4. Motivate the participants to create partnerships with others to deepen their reflection and to make it a learning experience. Motivate them to use the Training Course for getting feedback and developing their reflection on

learning objectives and how to reach these objectives in different ways.

5. During one of the last sessions it is recommended that you invite participants to reflect on their learning objectives and outcomes from the Training Course and describe them using the ‘Key competences’ framework.
6. Before you can generate and print the Youthpass Certificates, you, of course, have to fill in all the information related to the activity and the participants. Most of the steps can be prepared in advance - except the individual part about the participant’s learning during the Training Course (you will only know this at the end of the Course). In fact, and in order to save time, you could already have the Certificate signed by a legal/official representative of your organisation before the Course.
7. There is no need for participants to choose every Key competence - just the ones which are related to relevant learning outcomes. The others will not appear on the Certificate if you do not type anything in the particular fields. Remember that there is also a field for other specific skills worked on during the course.
8. The description of the learning outcomes can be prepared offline, preferably in an electronic format. This allows you to copy and paste the information online into the Youthpass generating tool. During a Training Course participants can work on several laptops (which are present these days anyway in many Training Courses). Motivate participants to ensure that the reflection is really based on a dialogue process where they use self-assessment and feedback to describe their learning objectives.

There are very creative ways of setting up the technical facilities to prepare the Youthpass Certificates during Courses, e.g., using internet cafes, or asking organisations nearby to provide access to computers and the internet.

If, however, you want to issue Youthpass after the Course, participants will then send you their reflections on their learning outcomes which can be integrated into the Certificate. Remember that it is still important to provide at least some time at the end of the Course for participants to discuss their learning outcomes with other participants and/or members of the trainers’ team.

You will find all relevant technical questions concerning the website, the technical conditions and procedures on www.youthpass.eu.

B4. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in Training Courses

4 Use of Languages for Youthpass in Training Courses

As a basic standard, Youthpass will be generated in the native language of the country where the project was approved. Concretely, this means that if you apply in Germany and you have a contract from the German National Agency, you have a German contract number and German Youthpass Certificates will be generated.

If participants request it, then you can use other EU languages: as the multilingual website is developed, it will be possible to generate Youthpass in all the official languages of the European Union.

An increasing number of participants also want to describe their learning objectives and outcomes in another language – often English. You will need to provide opportunities for people to give each other support in this.

5 Key competences in Training Courses

The following part provides assistance in understanding and using the Key competences during the dialogue process between participants in Training Courses or between a trainer and a participant to describe learning outcomes. You are encouraged to have a look at other sections of the Youthpass Guide (such as chapter B1 “How to support learning”) which give further hints and ideas to facilitate the use of Youthpass in the Youth in Action Programme.

The background to the Key competences

The European Union has defined basic Key competences for Lifelong Learning in Europe. All types of education can refer to this same framework, and so do we in the Youth in Action Programme. Competence is defined as being a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Have a look at Chapter A4 “You hold the keys to Lifelong Learning” for a detailed explanation of the development of the framework.

Key competences in the Youth in Action Programme

Using Key competences as a tool to describe the learning outcomes from experiences gained within the Youth in Action Programme is new. The decision to go down this path is part of an overall strategy to support young people in their personal lifelong learning process and to promote the recognition of youth work in the wider society and its importance in political priorities. One part of the Lifelong Learning strategy is the focus on employability but the other part – which is important and closer to what we know as ‘youth work’ - is the future life of young people and coping with challenges that come from changes in societies. With Youthpass both aspects will be highlighted.

This common European ‘Key competences’ framework helps us in using a more coherent European language to talk about learning experiences across different environments.

Below you will find the European definition of the Key competences, and what they might look like in a Training Course. It will hopefully give you ideas on how you can describe learning outcomes.



B4. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in Training Courses

You are invited to use the 'Key competences' terminology when describing the learning outcomes of Training Courses. This offers guidelines towards a common European approach and a more coherent European language to report and present these experiences including different environments. Especially in view of the new Youth in Action Programme, the use of the Key competences here is intended to improve the quality of Courses in supporting multipliers in their work.

Each of the Key competences is used in the following way:

- 1) an extract from the original wording of the Key competences, and
- 2) suggestions on how to reflect on this competence in the context of Training Courses.

For some participants it may be a relatively new exercise to jump into self-assessment. You may find it useful to offer some examples of half sentences which they can use when describing their competence development. Here are some examples taken from chapter B1 "How to support learning":

- > *I feel more comfortable now...*
- > *I found out...*
- > *I learned...*
- > *I feel confident...*
- > *I made progress...*
- > *I'm able to...*
- > *I know now how...*
- > *I developed...*
- > *I have a clear view now...*



Communication in the mother tongue

The original wording of the Key competence

Communication in the mother tongue is the ability to express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form (listening, speaking, reading and writing), and to interact linguistically in an appropriate and creative way in a full range of societal and cultural contexts; in education and training, work, home and leisure.

Suggestion for use in Training Courses

These days, most participants in Youth in Action Programme courses use a language other than their mother tongue to express themselves and, on top of this, most of the other participants have a different language. Of course, there will still be participants who will be able to use their mother tongue in Courses and for them the challenges are different but still large: Will others understand my references? How do I learn to slow down and speak more clearly? Can I make myself understood to people that do not have a background in youth work? Can I communicate across different dialects?

Questions which can help you reflect are:

- > *When and how well did I use my mother tongue?*
- > *What difficulties did I experience in communicating? How did I overcome those difficulties?*
- > *What opportunities did I have to use my mother tongue? How well did others understand me?*
- > *How did I adapt my language to the level of the people I was speaking to? Did I make other people feel OK about not speaking perfectly what was - for them - a foreign language?*

B4. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in Training Courses



Communication in foreign languages

The original wording of the Key competence

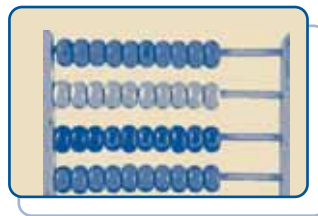
Communication in foreign languages broadly shares the main skill dimensions as communication in the mother tongue: it is based on the ability to understand, express and interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions in both oral and written form (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in an appropriate range of societal and cultural contexts (in education and training, work, home and leisure) according to one's wants or needs. Communication in foreign languages also calls for skills such as mediation and intercultural understanding. An individual's level of proficiency will vary between the four dimensions (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and between the different languages, and according to that individual's social and cultural background, environment, needs and/or interests.

Suggestions for use in Training Courses

These days, most participants in the Youth in Action Programme courses use a language other than their mother tongue to express themselves and, on top of this, most of the other participants have a different language.

Questions which can help you reflect are:

- > *When and how well did I use another language here?*
- > *What difficulties did I experience in communicating? How did I overcome those difficulties?*
- > *How creative was I in explaining things if I did not find the correct word?*
- > *Did I also have a go at writing flip-charts etc. – or was I too embarrassed to write?*
- > *What are my future plans regarding learning another language?*



Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology

The original wording of the Key competence

A. Mathematical competence is the ability to develop and apply mathematical thinking in order to solve a range of problems in everyday situations. Building on a sound mastery of numeracy, the emphasis is on process and activity, as well as knowledge. Mathematical competence involves, to different degrees, the ability and willingness to use mathematical modes of thought (logical and spatial thinking) and presentation (formulas, models, constructs, graphs, charts).

B. Competence in science refers to the ability and willingness to use the body of knowledge and methodology employed to explain the natural world, in order to identify questions and to draw evidence-based conclusions. Competence in technology is viewed as the application of that knowledge and methodology in response to perceived human wants or needs. Competence in science and technology involves an understanding of the changes caused by human activity and responsibility as an individual citizen.

B4. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in Training Courses

Suggestions for use in Training Courses

Apart from budgetary competences, it is initially a bit of a challenge to think about how these competences can be addressed in Youth in Action courses! But once you start to think about it, there is a lot to work on! One of the key issues in current youth work is how to relate youth work practice to the growing area of youth research. This is especially important with regard to encouraging those involved in youth work to become what is known as 'reflective practitioners'.

Questions which can help you reflect are:

- > *When did I use my mathematical competence in this Course?*
- > *Which presentation skills did I develop here?*
- > *How did I apply mathematical skills in division of groups, in drawing up budgets, in counting vegetarians, prices of activities, etc.?*
- > *How did I integrate youth research results into my discussions with others in the Course?*
- > *How do I intend to contribute to youth research or use youth research results in my youth work?*
- > *How did I deduce logical conclusions based on practical arguments/experiences (deductive approach), how did I test a 'theory' (theoretical approach) in practice (inductive approach)?*
- > *How did I (learn to) use technology available for youth work – e.g. toolbox databases, Polaroids, digital cameras for reporting, Projectors, new style flipcharts, youth work methods involving 'objects' (card games, simulations, debriefing,...)?*



Digital competence

The original wording of the Key competence

Digital competence involves the confident and critical use of Information Society Technology (IST) for work, leisure and communication. It is underpinned by basic skills in ICT: the use of computers to retrieve, assess, store, produce, present and exchange information, and to communicate and participate in collaborative networks via the internet.

Suggestions for use in Training Courses

With the massive expansion of computer and internet use recently, the need to develop critical usage of ICT is growing in youth work.

Questions which can help you reflect are:

- > *What information sources did I use to prepare myself for this Course?*
- > *To what extent did I communicate with other participants over the internet before the Course? (Or do I intend to use the internet for this purpose after the Course?)*
- > *What did I learn about computer use in other countries here?*
- > *How will I work with young people to develop a critical approach to knowledge available on the internet (for instance)?*
- > *How did I learn to use online resources for my youth work (toolbox, training calendar, mailing lists, finding partners, etc.)?*

B4. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in Training Courses



Learning to learn

The original wording of the Key competence

'Learning to learn' is the ability to pursue and persist in learning, to organise one's own learning, including through effective management of time and information, both individually and in groups. This competence includes awareness of one's learning process and needs, identifying available opportunities, and the ability to overcome obstacles in order to learn successfully. This competence means gaining, processing and assimilating new knowledge and skills as well as seeking and making use of guidance. Learning to learn engages learners to build on prior learning and life experiences in order to use and apply knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts: at home, at work, in education and training. Motivation and confidence are crucial to an individual's competence.

Suggestions for use in Training Courses

Crucial to an understanding of this competence is the responsibility of the learner within the process.

Questions which can help you reflect are:

- > *What were my learning goals within this Course?*
- > *Did I reach them?*
- > *How did I learn?*
- > *Which activities in the Course motivated me most in my learning?*
- > *Where did my theoretical knowledge improve?*
- > *Which methods did I use to evaluate what I learned?*
- > *Why is this important for my work, my organisation?*
- > *How will I use what I learned?*



Social and Civic competence

The original wording of the Key competence

These include personal, interpersonal and intercultural competences and cover all forms of behaviour that equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life, and particularly in increasingly diverse societies, and to resolve conflict where necessary. Civic competence equips individuals to fully participate in civic life, based on knowledge of social and political concepts and structures and a commitment to active and democratic participation.

Suggestions for use in Training Courses

Much effort has been invested into developing such competences within the YOUTH Programme in the past, as these are vital building blocks for young people to be able to function within today's increasingly diverse societies.

Questions which can help you reflect on social and intercultural competences are:

- > *What was my intercultural learning process during this Course?*
- > *Did I take the initiative, go towards others, support others, was I available for informal talks and social contacts here?*
- > *When was I most successful in communicating with others here?*
- > *Which social competences did I develop during this event?*
- > *What part did I play (if any) in helping to resolve or manage conflicts in the group?*
- > *How did I improve my ability to work in a team?*

B4. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in Training Courses

Within the Youth in Action Programme, much emphasis is placed on the concept of European Citizenship and how this can help young people understand and be active within society and develop civic competences.

Questions which can help you reflect are:

- > *How much was I actively involved in the Course?*
- > *Did I find out how to influence developments in the Course? Did I use this knowledge?*
- > *When did I participate in decision-making within this activity?*
- > *How did I take into account different opinions (in working groups, plenary, etc.)?*
- > *How did my knowledge of national and/or European structures increase here?*



Sense of Initiative and Entrepreneurship

The original wording of the Key competence

Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship refers to an individual's ability to turn ideas into action. It includes creativity, innovation and risk-taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. This supports individuals, not only in their everyday lives at home and in society, but also in the workplace in being aware of the context of their work and being able to seize

opportunities, and is a foundation for more specific skills and knowledge needed by those establishing or contributing to social or commercial activity. This should include awareness of ethical values and promote good governance.

Suggestions for use in Training Courses

This is one of the Key competences that changed quite a lot in the consultation process, having been only concerned with entrepreneurship at the beginning. With the addition of 'sense of initiative', the competence fits more easily into a youth work context. It is also possible to look at the creation of new projects and initiatives involving young people as a form of social entrepreneurship.

Questions which can help you reflect are:

- > *Did I take up any tasks during the Course, did I propose things that I could share with the group?*
- > *How did my understanding of the practice and principles of project management increase in this Course?*
- > *When did I take risks here? And what did I learn in the process?*
- > *What chances did I take to express my creativity and use new knowledge and skills gained during the Course?*
- > *How will I use the concepts of innovation and risk management in my future youth projects?*
- > *Did I see and seize opportunities for cooperation or networking during the Course? Make contacts that could be useful for my youth work later (common projects, etc.)?*

B4. Youthpass in practice

Youthpass in Training Courses



Cultural awareness and expression

The original wording of the Key competence

Appreciation of the importance of the creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions in a range of media, including music, performing arts, literature, and the visual arts.

Suggestions for use in Training Courses

All forms of creativity and media can find their place in youth work and they are the main reason many young people participate. Increasing cultural awareness helps prepare the ground for effective intercultural learning.

Questions which can help you reflect are:

- > *How willing was I to get involved in new forms of cultural experience here?*
- > *When was I able to use different media and forms of expression (e.g. verbal, drawing, body,...) to express myself during the Course?*
- > *Which skills did I improve?*
- > *How do I intend to involve young people in such cultural expression in the future?*

European Portfolio for Youth Workers and Youth Leaders

Dealing with Youthpass in Training Courses provides a major opportunity for youth workers and youth leaders to develop their skills in self-reflection and self-assessment. It may well be that participants want to integrate these skills into a longer term perspective. So, depending on the target group of your Training Course, you might find it useful in the self-assessment to also refer to the functional analysis and competence framework to be found in the European Portfolio for Youth Workers and Youth Leaders published by the Council of Europe. In any case, youth workers and youth leaders can use Youthpass Certificates to help them build up their own portfolios.

The Portfolio can be freely downloaded here:
www.coe.int/youthportfolio

Europass

Dealing with Youthpass in Training Courses provides a major opportunity for youth worker and youth leader to develop their self-reflection and their personal and professional learning. It may well be that participants would like to use this for their further professional career path. They will find it important to use the Europass Curriculum Vitae or the Europass Language Passport for their next steps in life.

They will find the Europass web site including further resources here:
<http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/>



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