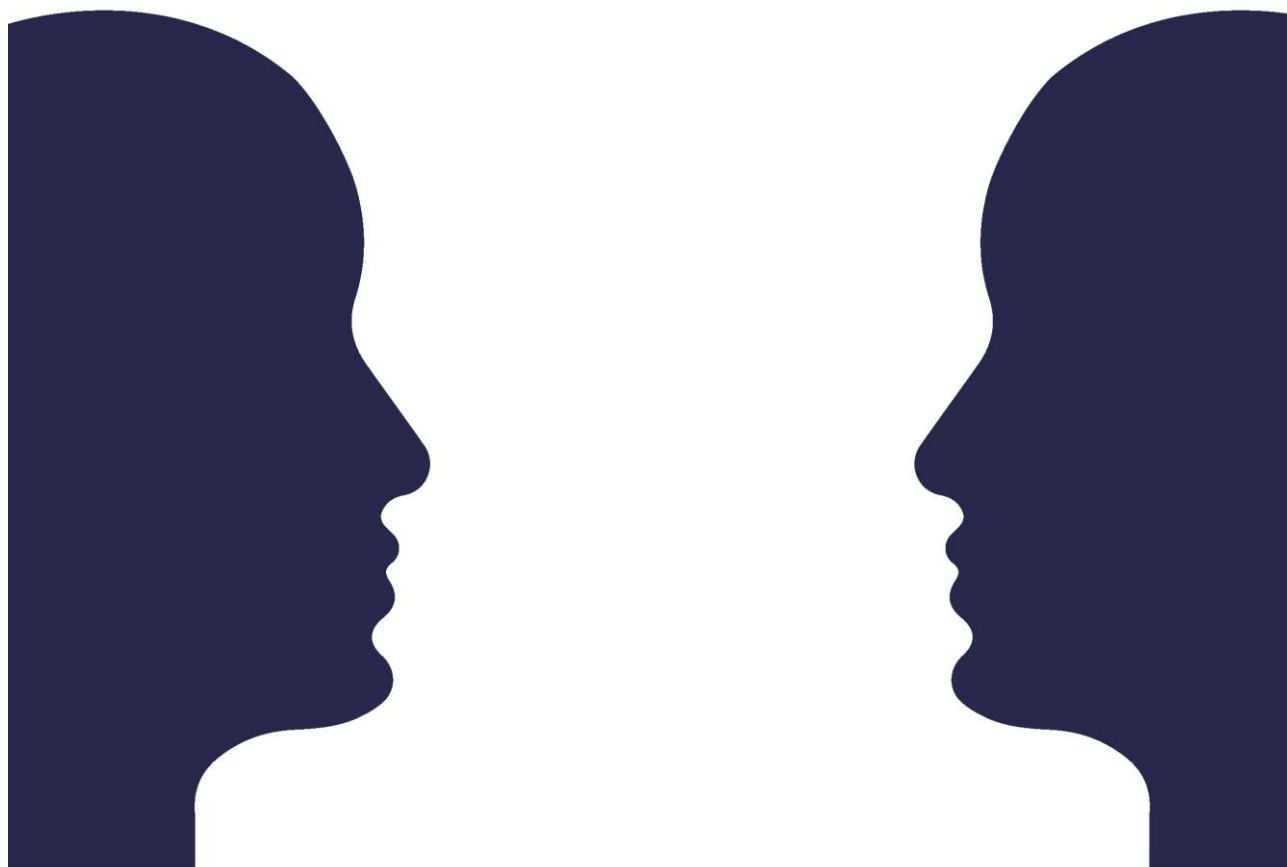




EVALUATION, ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION IN
Non Formal EDUCATION



Outcomes of the European Seminar

"Evaluation, assessment and recognition in Non Formal Education"

Chieti (Italy)

12th - 18th February 2018

Project realised by

ARCI Nuova Associazione

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Coordination of contents by:

Giorgio Micoli

Mario Serrao

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INTRODUCTION

Non Formal Education represents an efficient and effective tool to properly address the needs of young people in terms of education, training, acquisition of skills and competences able to increase their motivation to accomplish their curriculum and to reduce the factors that produce NEET status, marginalisation and exclusion.

Self-assessment, evaluations and ways to recognise own competences are very important steps in the curriculum of young people especially to address their needs of learning, to understand their level of knowledge and skills, to apply properly their competences in order to foster both social and human capital of young people. This aspect is really important also for all those persons who work with young people in both non formal and formal contexts (schools, youth centres, youth councils, institutions, etc.). That's why teachers, youth workers, youth leaders, are more and more looking for efficient methods to address the personal development of young people.

Main idea of the Seminar "***Evaluation, assessment and recognition in Non Formal Education***" has been to settle an educational path in order to deepen the knowledge of characteristic of Non Formal Education focusing the attention on the specific aspects of assessment, evaluation and recognition of learning processes of young people. Through this project we wanted to combine theoretical and practical activities in order to gain knowledge on different assessment, evaluation and recognition systems, to use and multiply them in the daily activities of supporting young people, identifying specific fields of intervention and quality guidelines

Participants were introduced not only theoretically but also practically to the Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio, the European Union Youthpass, the experience of Competences Passport: 3 different methods, 3 different meanings, 3 different targets that, anyway, provided a wider concept of how important and fundamental is the assessment, evaluation and recognition for the personal development of young people. At the same time, participants were asked to provide eventual other experiences, methods, good practices applied at several level (within NGOs, youth centres or youth council, at national, regional, local level, etc.) in order to have a sort of map of realities. Furthermore, after checking possible fields of application of assessment, evaluation and recognition (schools, NGOs, youth centres, youth councils, etc.), participants identified guidelines to be applied and multiplied as a sort of common and shared platform on how to assess, evaluate and recognise learning processes, acquisition of competences and skill development of young people.

The seminar took place in Chieti, Abruzzo Region, Italy from 12th till 18th February 2018 involving 20 among youth workers, youth leaders, responsible of youth centres, volunteers, educators from Italy, Spain, Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Poland, Slovenia, Bulgaria, Romania, Macedonia, Albania, Serbia, Bosnia Herzegovina. The project was coordinated by a team of facilitators and support staff coming from Italy, Belgium and Bulgaria.

The Seminar has been funded and supported by the Erasmus+ Programme through the Italian Agenzia Nazionale per i Giovani.

This booklet collects all the outcomes produced by the project in order to be available, used, shared and multiplied by all those are interested. In case, please, quote the source, thanks.

Enjoy your reading!

NON FORMAL EDUCATION

“Non Formal Education is an organised educational activity outside the established formal system that is intended to serve an identifiable learning clientele with identifiable learning objectives” (1996 *Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the 21st Century by Mr. Jacques Delors*)

Learning is a dynamic process and the current educational landscape cannot be understood only by looking at classrooms. Very often formal education institutions (schools and universities) and public institutions (such as youth councils) are not properly able to address the current needs of young people in terms of education, training, acquisition of skills, and competencies.

Non formal education (NFE) is a participatory way of learning through exploring, observing, playing, rethinking, acting and sharing. NFE is a structured pedagogical approach to education with clear learning goals and objectives, which enable young people to develop fresh perspectives and construct their own unique learning path.

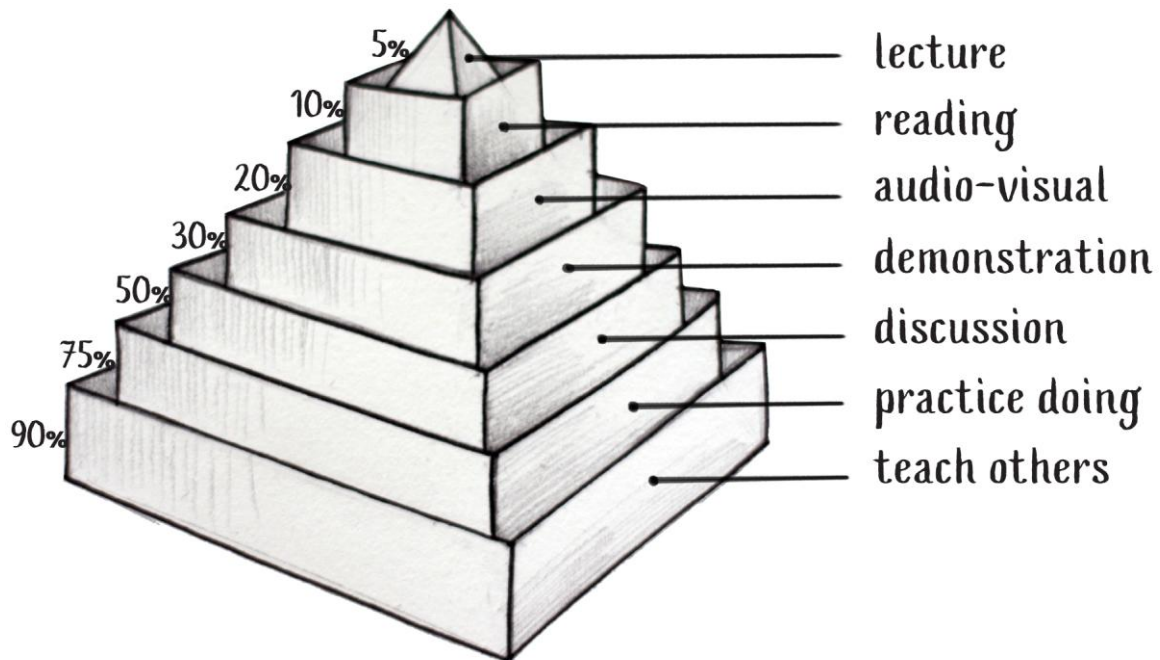
Non Formal Education key-words:

Critical thinking	Flexibility	To be adapted
Develop ideas	Volunteering approach	From individual to teamwork to
Team work - Cooperation	Creative context	social
Possibility to make mistakes	Without thinking you are learning	Possibility of self-evaluation
Solidarity	Possibility to explore	Learning without pressure
Challenge	Interdisciplinary	Multiple intelligence
Learning by doing	Need analysis	Mistakes allowed
Abstract goal	Implicit learning	
Multicultural		

The flow of everyday life brings us many learning experiences, and the increasing number of learning environments both virtual and IRL (in real life), create challenges for traditional education institutions. If they are to function well within this new network of learning environments they will need to adapt their practices and architecture. For schools this is difficult: they were created to serve a defined pedagogical mission and support traditional learning practices. From a critical perspective schools are equipped to control docile bodies (Foucault, M. - 1995, *Discipline & punish*, Vintage, New York.), not to offer flexible learning environments.

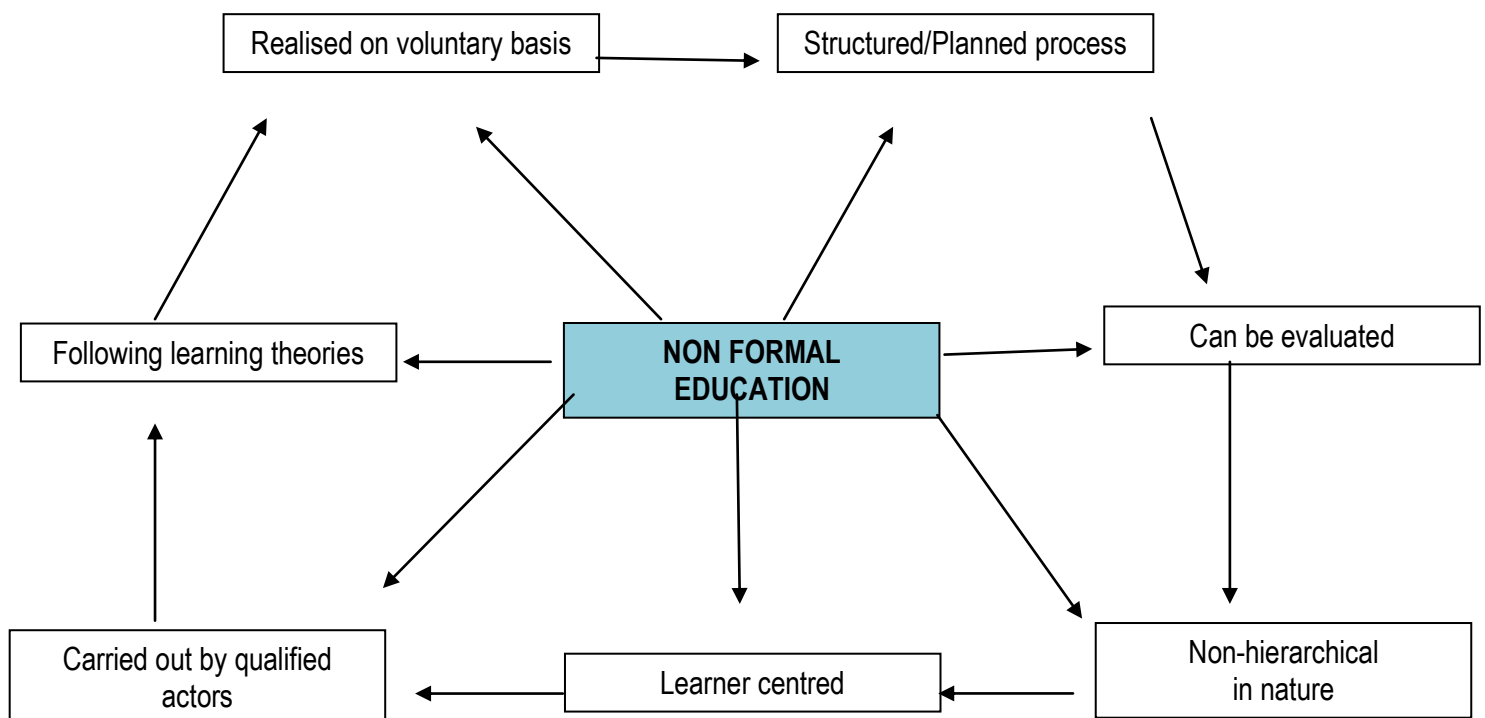
For these reasons, combined with the growing complexities of our globalised society and the social issues facing young people today (including issues of bullying, early school leaving, NEET status, special educational needs and cultural needs) NFE can play a significant part in adapting the current educational institutions. NFE can have a role in equipping young people with the skills that are needed in the labour market, in educational spheres, for their own personal development, and for their well-being; whilst at the same time representing an efficient and effective tool to contribute to the mission of formal education systems and public institutions.

NFE methodologies include the methods of non-formal and informal learning, intercultural learning, experiential and active pedagogy, mentoring and peer support, and relationship-based activities. The methods are designed to ensure the direct involvement of participants at all times during the educational process, promoting freedom of expression, exchange, cooperation, interaction, and creativity. It is a solid base to use when working with a range of people and this is the reason why NFE fits perfectly with formal education activities and community development.



In nature there is always diversity, so naturally there is also diversity in the learning styles of humans. NFE offers a playground where participants can use Multiple Intelligences to improve skills and competencies in alternative ways: it weaves together a variety of techniques to support this planned process of learning engaging the whole person into it (body, mind and heart) and generating a strong emphasis on the social and cooperative dimension of learning.

The main elements of Non Formal Education methodology, can be summarised as the following:

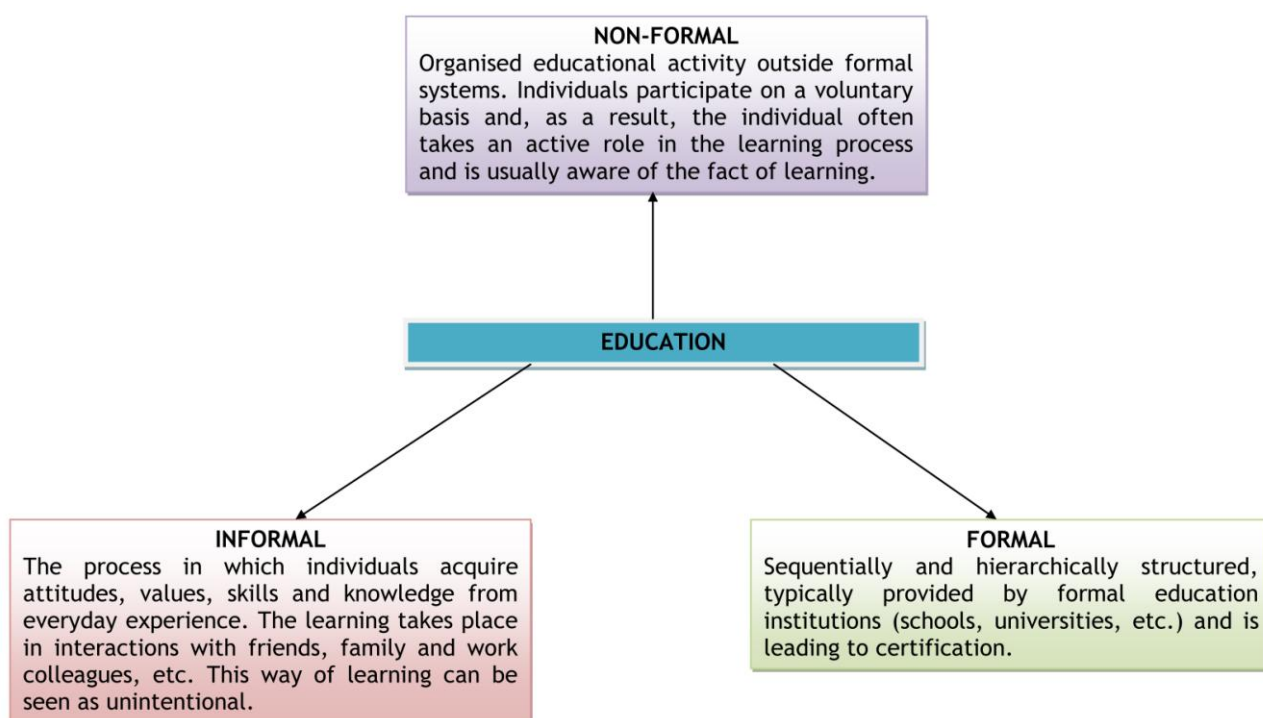


Between Formal and Non Formal Education, there are few differences in approaches, methodologies and activities, that's worth to list:

FORMAL EDUCATION	NON FORMAL EDUCATION
Teaching	Learning
Teacher	Facilitator
Student	Learner/Participant
Teacher centred	Learner centred Participatory
Intellectual approach	Holistic approach Head/Heart/Hands
Fixed program	Flexibility / Variety of forms
Certification	Certification Evaluation Assessment
Competitive	Cooperative Social Dimension

The concept of learning as process of acquisition should be coupled with the idea of learning as participation (Communities of practice — Learning, meaning and identity, 24 Cambridge University Press, Cambridge. Wenger, 1998) as a way of taking part in a community process. Many important matters today — such as media and education, environmental education, peace education or entrepreneurial learning — require a holistic approach. The traditional subjects of the school curriculum are not always capable of meeting the requirements of these fields. But new ways of promoting learning can be created through cooperation with NFE sector, especially when trying to tackle questions that lie outside traditional school subjects, where the methods used in NFE may be more appropriate.

"Tell me and I will forget. Show me and I will remember. Involve me and I will understand"



THE EVALUATION

Why an evaluation?

- to check the degree of reaching concerning the objectives (general and specific) which has been proposed and to make the participants aware of this objectives (group restitution)
- to check how things are proceeding and, if necessary, to change a bit the methodology.
- to learn thanks to what has been done and, consequently, to grow up establishing the basis of future projects.

What to evaluate?

in general:

- the achievement in the fields of "knowledge", of "how to do" and of "how to be"

in particular:

- the reaching of the objectives pre defined (general and specific)
- the activities realised
- the group dynamics: participation, sharing, communication, interaction and interdependence
- the satisfaction regarding the expectations of the participants.
- the environment, the well and bad being of the group.
- the cohesion and the coordination of the animation team.
- the preparation made by the participants.
- the idea and the theme.
- the coherence between the established objectives and the activities realised.
- the methodology used and its correspondence with the objectives.
- the instruments and the resources used.
- the gap between what is declared and what is done.
- the acquisition of new competences from the participants.
- the collaboration and the communication between the involved partners/stakeholders (before, during, after).
- the grade of intercultural learning among the participants.
- the logistic.
- the economic part.
- the relapse of the project at a personal and a collective level.
- the possibility of continuity of the project (follow up).

How to evaluate?

- distinction between quantitative and qualitative instruments.
- personal evaluation, in small groups, in plenary session, formal, informal.
- instruments: questionnaires, meetings, report, logbook, "cold evaluation", graphic creation, creation of a "product", free spaces to fill in, etc.
- importance of the self-evaluation.

Who evaluates?

- the participants
- the team of facilitators/trainers/leaders
- each homogeneous group (s.a. a national group in an international meeting)
- - the team of facilitators/trainers/leaders and the participants.
- - the responsables of the promoting organisation of the activity/project.

- - the main funding institution
- - the co-funding bodies
- - the community and all the other stakeholders involved (directly or indirectly)

When to evaluate?

- initial evaluation, to fix the starting point.
- every day, to follow the course of the activities (if the case).
- intermediate evaluation, to adjust the methodology, the activities, the logistic, etc.
- final evaluation, on the spur of the moment.
- "cold" evaluation

EXERCISE: "THE IMPORTANCE OF EVALUATION AND RECOGNITION ACTIVITIES"

A practical tool to introduce the topic of evaluation, assessment and recognition

Group size: up to 30

Material needed: flipcharts, paper, markers, pens

Time: 90 min.

Stage 1 (at individual level - 20 min.)

THINK ABOUT A NON FORMAL EDUCATION ACTIVITY YOU TOOK PART (DOESN'T MATTER IF IT WAS INTERNATIONAL OR NOT AND DOESN'T MATTER IF IT TOOK PLACE RECENTLY OR NOT)

- How would you describe the Non Formal Education activity you took part in?
- Did you realise any evaluation activity before, during and/or after the activity?
- Was it important to have those evaluation activities? Why? Did the evaluations provide any effect on the activity (concerning logistic, methodology, approach, group dynamic?)
- Did you receive any certificate or recognition document?
- How have the Non Formal Education experience influenced you?
 - for your personal development (knowledge, skills, competences)
 - for your social development (engagement in social/cultural/political life, credits at school/university, employability, etc.)

Stage 2 (in sub groups of 4/5 - 40 min.)

- Share and compare your answers and underline similarities and differences
- Try to enhance your point of view to a more general one. Could you define eventual important elements of evaluations inside a NFE activity? Which cascade effects could be generated by evaluations?
- Why it is important to recognise Non Formal Education activities? Which elements should be taken into consideration when recognition activities are organised?

Summarize your answers and discussion as the result of the point of view of your sub group, write them on a flipchart.

Stage 3 (in plenary - 30 min)

Sharing results of each sub-group in plenary session giving possibilities for questions, clarification, interaction among sub-group

As a dynamic alternative, each sub group, having its own flipchart as reference text, realise a short theatre representation (no more than 2 minutes)

TOOLS FOR EVALUATION, ASSESSMENT AND RECOGNITION

YOUTHPASS

Youthpass is the Europe-wide instrument to document the learning experience and outcomes of the projects of the Erasmus+ Youth in Action programme. It aims at fostering the recognition of the non-formal learning outcomes gained in the projects. An essential part of the concept is the reflection upon the personal learning process. In December 2015, the threshold of 500,000 Youthpass certificates has been reached. The multilingual certificates are issued to the participants of various projects supported by Erasmus+: Youth in Action (and previously by the Youth in Action Programme), on the website which is available in 25 languages. The first steps of mainstreaming Youthpass as a national recognition tool have been undertaken in Estonia and Latvia.

Youthpass is a tool to document and recognise learning outcomes from youth work activities. It is available for projects funded by Erasmus+: Youth in Action (2014-2020) and Youth in Action (2007-2013) programmes. It is a part of the European Commission's strategy to foster the recognition of non-formal learning, putting policy into practice and practice into policy:

- While creating their Youthpass certificate together with a support person, project participants are given the possibility to describe what they have done in their project and which competences* they have acquired. Thus, Youthpass supports the reflection upon the personal non-formal learning process and outcomes.
- As a Europe-wide recognition instrument for non-formal learning in the youth field, Youthpass strengthens the social recognition of youth work.
- Youthpass supports active European citizenship of young people and of youth workers by describing the added value of their project.
- Youthpass also aims at supporting the employability of young people and of youth workers by raising their awareness of and helping to describe their competences, and by documenting their acquisition of key competences on a certificate.

Who can use Youthpass?

Within the Erasmus+: Youth in Action programme, Youthpass certificates are currently available for the following activities:

- Youth Exchanges;
- European Voluntary Service;
- Mobility of Youth Workers;
- Structured Dialogue meetings;
- Transnational Cooperation Activities (TCA) of the National Agencies.

The certificates can also be issued for projects that were granted under the previous, Youth in Action programme (2007-2013).

All participants of the projects approved within these frameworks are entitled to receive a Youthpass certificate, and thus recognition for their non-formal learning outcomes.

The responsibility to issue the Youthpass certificates to the participants/volunteers, in case they wish to receive them, lies with the organisation that signs the contract for the Erasmus+ grant.

Why Youthpass?

Using Youthpass can add value to the youth projects where it is used, in several ways:

- Through the Youthpass process, reflection on learning becomes more structured and the educational value of the project is strengthened. It makes the learning of the participants more conscious. Being more aware of their competences, it gets easier for the participants to make use of them in the future. Thus, Youthpass supports the future pathways of the young people.
- By putting emphasis on the learning processes and outcomes in youth work, using Youthpass helps to increase the so-called Learning to Learn competence. It raises the participants' awareness of learning in a diversity of contexts and helps them to reflect on their learning wishes and needs.

- The description of competences developed by participating in the youth projects also helps to increase the visibility of the value of youth work – of your work!

Youthpass IS	Youthpass IS NOT
a process of reflection that helps to define and describe learning outcomes in a youth project, leading to a certificate that documents these learning outcomes	something which gives any rights to the holder
a confirmation of participation by the organisers of a specific activity	a formal accreditation of competences
a description of the activity where the person participated	a replacement for any formal qualifications
an individualised description of the specific activities undertaken and of the learning outcomes	available to demonstrate learning outcomes from activities undertaken in the YOUTH programme (which came to an end in 2006)
a certificate for people participating in the activities supported by the EU Youth in Action and Erasmus+: Youth in Action programmes	
a tool which puts the Key competences for Lifelong Learning into practice	
firmly based on principles of non-formal education and learning	
a way of improving visibility of learning in youth projects and more specifically, in the Erasmus+: Youth in Action programme	

Why should participants choose to use Youthpass?

- They can describe what they have done and learned in a project;
- They learn to find appropriate words to describe their competences;
- They become better aware of the competences they have;
- They become better aware about the different contexts and ways how people learn;
- They can show and explain their competences better to others, for example in a job interview, at school or for further projects;
- They can make further plans about what they would still like to learn and how;
- They will have an official confirmation about their participation in a project;
- They can show it off to their friends and family.

The political context of Youthpass

Youthpass has originally been developed in the context of the EU Youth in Action programme (2006-2013). In December of 2013, Erasmus+ was established as the Union's programme for education, training, youth and sport, for the years 2014-2020. Besides formal education, Erasmus+ focuses also on non-formal and informal learning. The recognition of competences is an important part of the Erasmus+ legal text. Among other recognition instruments it specifically highlights Youthpass for the youth part of the programme.

The Youthpass certificate describes learning outcomes along the key competences for lifelong learning, which were first outlined in the Recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning (2006). These key competences define a set of knowledge, skills and attitudes that each individual needs for personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment. Using this framework, Youthpass helps to build a bridge from non-formal and informal learning to other forms of education.

More recently, the political context of Youthpass includes the following documents:

- Adopted in 2012, the Council recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning suggests that the Union transparency tools (such as Youthpass) should be promoted in the process of establishing national systems for validation of non-formal and informal learning outcomes.
- In 2015, the Council conclusions on enhancing cross-sectorial policy cooperation to effectively address socio-economic challenges facing young people invite the EU Member States and the European Commission to explore the possibilities of mainstreaming the Youthpass certificate outside the Erasmus+ programme and using it as a national tool for recognition, if relevant.

Key Competences* for Lifelong Learning

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

Youthpass Certificates

Structure of the certificate.

The Youthpass certificates are specific to the various types of non-formal learning projects within Erasmus+: Youth in Action, but the general structure of the certificate is the same. The Youthpass certificate is divided into three sections.

1. The first page confirms the participation in a given project and lists the main facts about the project. It also provides background information about the general context and value of the activity. It has to be signed by a legal representative of the organisation.
2. The second section informs about the project in more detail. The organisations in charge are mentioned, the aims, activities, and results of the project described. This part of the certificate has to be signed by the person responsible for the project.
3. In the third section, participants reflect upon their learning and the outcomes. They are encouraged to describe what they have learnt in the course of the project, adhering to the eight key competences for lifelong learning. If applicable, a dialogue partner is also invited to sign the third section. There is neither a limitation to how much the participants are allowed to write, nor do they have to include every single competence.

Multilingualism.

Youthpass certificates can be issued in several languages; it is also possible to issue one certificate in several languages. Supported by the National Agencies, the translations are work in progress and many are currently in the making.

Youthpass certificates are currently available in the following languages.

1. Youth Exchanges, European Voluntary Service, and Mobility of Youth Workers;
 - Croatian, Czech, English, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Spanish.
2. Transnational Training and Cooperation Activities (TCA);
 - Croatian, Czech, English, Finnish, French, German, Italian, Spanish.
3. Youth in Policy Dialogue (Structured Dialogue meetings);
 - Croatian, Czech, English, French, German, Spanish.

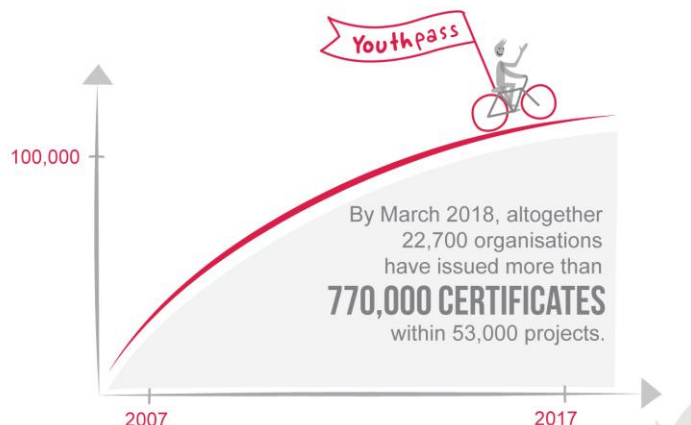
10 YEARS OF YOUTHPASS

YOUTHPASS

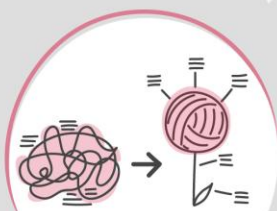
is a recognition tool for non-formal and informal learning in youth projects.

It is available for activities that are supported within the framework of the EU Erasmus+: Youth in Action programme.

It was launched in July 2007, and has in the following years been increasingly used.



YOUTHPASS HELPS THE PARTICIPANTS OF PROJECTS TO ...



... raise the awareness of their development and learning through the project



... increase the usefulness of the project



... communicate about the learning value of their project experience



... widen their understanding of learning and of competences related to learning

THROUGH THE SUPPORT TO ORGANISATIONS, YOUTHPASS ...



... helps to communicate and increase the learning value of youth work



... helps to highlight the importance of non-formal learning



... contributes to the quality of youth work

Youthpass is developed and implemented by the European Commission and SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre, in cooperation with the National Agencies for the Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme.

Participants of projects that finished in 2015 were asked 2-11 months later,

WHETHER THEY HAD USED THEIR YOUTHPASS CERTIFICATE

when applying somewhere – for example a job or an internship, or for studies.



30% had presented their certificate



68% of them said that Youthpass had been helpful in the application process¹

THIS IS HOW YOUNG PEOPLE DESCRIBE THEIR EXPERIENCES

I joined the Erasmus+ program in 2014. Three years and twelve projects later I was sitting in an interview for my Undergraduate study. I mentioned working with people and how I have non-formal education experience in this area.

I HAD BROUGHT MY YOUTHPASS CERTIFICATES.

The certificates proved to be extremely useful because they served as a physical evidence of my participation in the youth exchanges and the knowledge gained.

I STOOD OUT FROM MORE THAN 600 CANDIDATES

in the interview and ultimately successfully enrolled in the desired study.

Among other competences, the experience of the Erasmus+ programme positively influenced my self-confidence and self-esteem.

Finally, YOUTHPASS HAS TAUGHT ME SELF-ASSESSMENT

SKILLS AND HOW TO BECOME AWARE of the knowledge and competences that I acquired, both of which help me in everyday life.



Getting a Youthpass is an important thing about Erasmus+.

I HAVE ALWAYS INCLUDED MY YOUTHPASS CERTIFICATES IN MY APPLICATIONS

and I am sure they have helped me: I have been a lucky girl more than once - just few weeks ago (hooray!) I got a job as baby club coordinator in a holiday resort.

Of course I AM NOT SAYING YOU CAN GET A JOB JUST BECAUSE YOU OWN A YOUTHPASS,

I just think it is a kind of a certificate of your personal skills - open-minded, independent, team worker... - which are as important as the professional ones.

Also **IT HELPS YOU DURING THE INTERVIEW**, you can talk more about yourself and about what you have learned, it is a nice way to capture the interlocutor's interest, especially if you have no work experience yet.

**WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT YOUTHPASS,
AND HOW TO USE IT IN YOUR PROJECT?**

GO TO YOUTHPASS.EU

¹ Exploring Erasmus+: Youth in Action. Effects and outcomes of the Erasmus+: Youth in Action Programme from the perspective of project participants and project leaders. Transnational Analysis 2015/16.

² Shortened versions of stories submitted to the competition 'My Youthpass Experience', organised by the Croatian National Agency for Erasmus+: Youth in Action.

Youthpass statistics

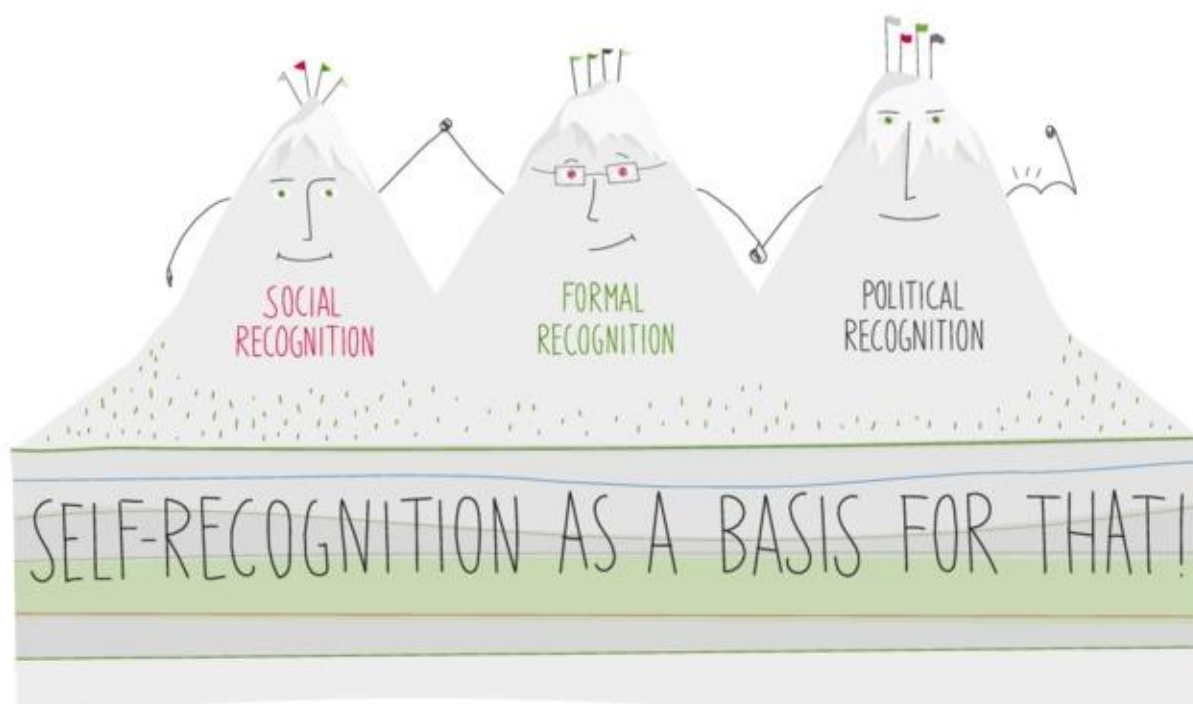
For Youthpass, quality is more important than quantity: to make full use of the certificate, young people and youth workers are invited to go through a process of reflecting on their learning results from youth projects.

However, numbers are useful for describing the trends. Below are the numbers of Youthpass certificates issued throughout the years of its existence. The table also shows the amount of projects for which Youthpass certificates have been issued, as well as the number of organisations that have issued certificates in specific years.

Overview of Youthpass in numbers			
Year	Certificates	Projects	Organisations
Total*	821,344	55,130	23,523
2018*	66,499	4,091	2,819
2017	127,652	7,463	4,627
2016	120,120	7,271	4,509
2015	116,883	7,169	4,600
2014	86,649	6,816	4,681
2013	97,960	7,359	4,864
2012	69,387	5,809	3,823
2011	49,182	4,777	3,006
2010	38,208	3,887	2,436
2009	27,131	2,989	1,879
2008	19,197	1,968	1,331
2007**	2,577	200	172

* Date: July 19, 2018.

** Youthpass was launched in July 2007.

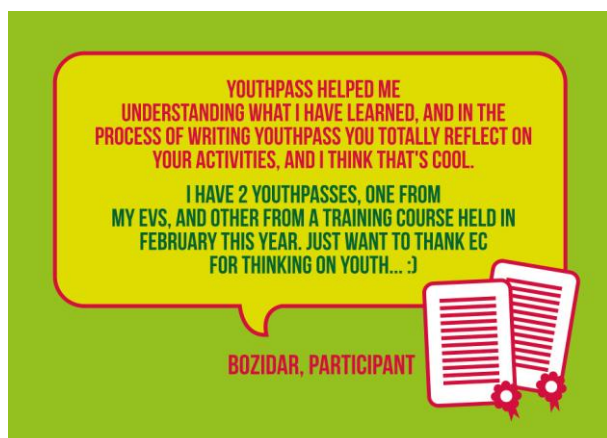


About recognition

In the youth work field and, therefore, in the context of Youthpass, we speak about the recognition of non-formal and informal learning in the youth field, and about the recognition of youth work (as educational practice). In terms of non-formal and informal learning, Youthpass seeks to enhance the recognition of both the learning process as well as the learning outcomes: the competences developed in youth work.

To understand the topic better, it is useful to distinguish between the four dimensions of recognition that define the various purposes and actors of recognition:

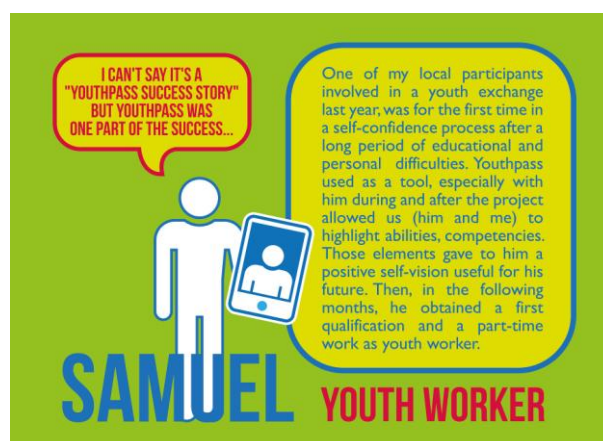
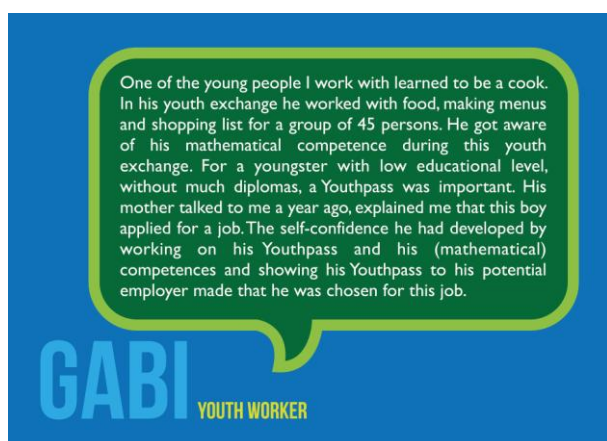
- Self-recognition or individual recognition includes personal awareness and assessment of learning outcomes, and the ability to use these learning outcomes in other fields. It also refers to the awareness within the youth sector about the value of youth work. Self-recognition is an important basis for the other forms of recognition and for developing the quality of our work.
- Social recognition means that various actors in society – for example parents, the school, employers – understand and acknowledge the value of youth work and of the competences acquired in non-formal learning settings.
- Formal recognition is often associated with the validation of learning outcomes and with the certification of a learning process and/or its outcomes. Through this process, the learning achievements are mostly compared to the qualifications acquired in formal education. It could also mean acquiring other types or aspects of an official status, for example accreditation of learning programmes, licensing of youth workers, etc.
- Political recognition is for instance manifested through the policies and legislations concerned with youth work or non-formal education. It could mean the extent to which the non-formal learning and its providers are included in political strategies on the various levels.



AFTER PARTICIPATING IN THE PROJECTS OF THE YOUTH IN ACTION PROGRAMME I DEVELOPED A TOOL CALLED "LEARNING AGENDA", WHICH IS NOW ON THE SALTO SITE WHICH ALLOWS PEOPLE TO RECORD DAILY THE SKILLS ACQUIRED TO MAKE IT EASIER TO WRITE YOUTHPASS.

ANIBALE, PARTICIPANT

DOPPO LA PARTECIPAZIONE A DEI PROGETTI DEL PROGRAMMA GIOVANI IN AZIONE HO SVILUPPATO UN TOOL CHIAMATO "LEARNING AGENDA". PRESENTE SUL SITO SALTO, PER REGISTRARE GIORNALMENTE LE COMPETENZE ACQUISITE A RENDERE PIÙ AGEVOLE LA SCRITTURA DELLO YOUTHPASS. ANIBALE, PARTICIPANTE



YOUTH WORK PORTFOLIO

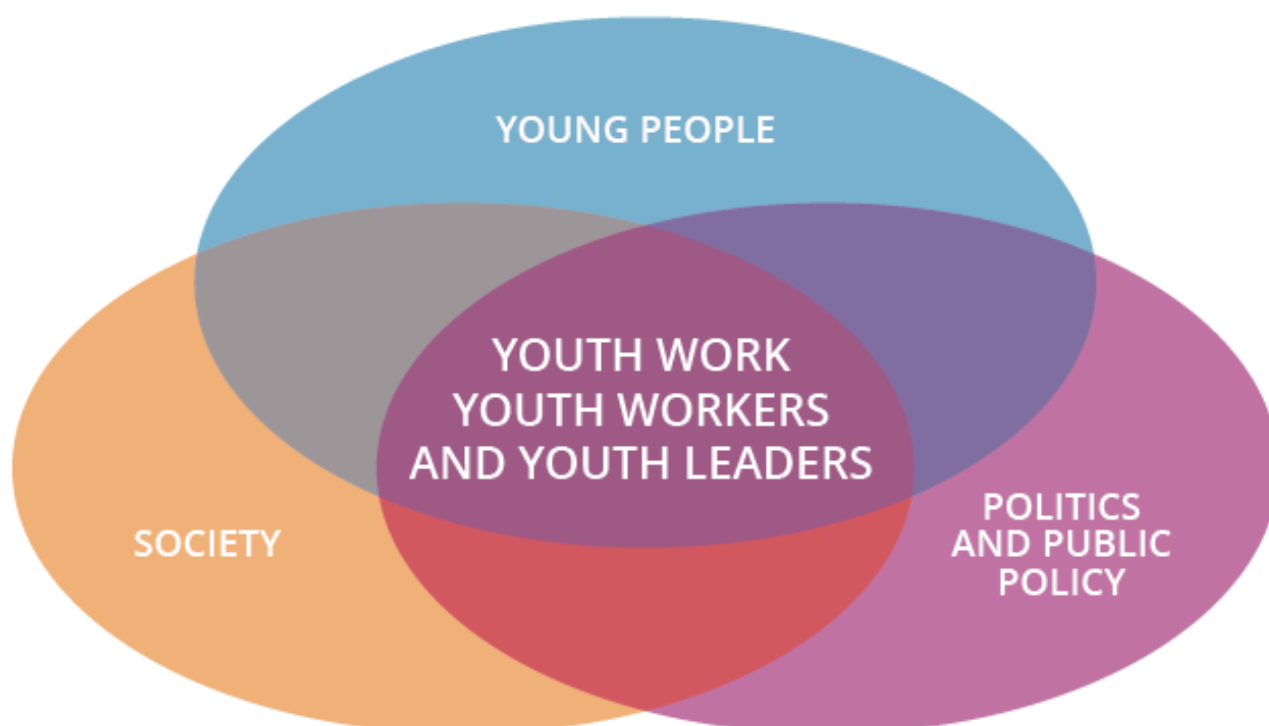
An online tool for quality development of youth work in Europe based on self-assessment of youth workers' competences

www.coe.int/youth-portfolio

What is youth work?

Youth work is commonly understood as a support for the personal development, social integration and active citizenship of young people. Youth work is an umbrella term for all kinds of activities with, for and by young people of a social, cultural, educational or political nature. It belongs to the domain of “out-of-school” education, most commonly referred to as either nonformal or informal learning. The main objective of youth work is to create opportunities for young people to shape their own futures. Youth work often has a strong educational purpose or dimension and non-formal education is at the core of this educational dimension. Youth work is also about influencing society, politics and power relations, especially if those put young people at a disadvantage, marginalise them or exclude them.

The practices of youth work across Europe are very diverse, as is the status of youth workers. Youth work can be organised by a variety of institutions and organisations, individually and in teams. Each country in Europe has its own history and traditions of youth work, ranging from long-established professional youth work provisions to relying mostly on voluntary youth work structures and youth organisations. For the purpose of the Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio, youth workers are all those involved in an active role in carrying out youth work, as qualified staff or volunteer youth leaders in organisations, as individuals or teams. The Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio is for any person or organisation doing youth work, whatever their status – voluntary or professional – and in whichever constellation – individual, team or organisational partnership. It has been developed to consider the wide variety of youth work realities in Europe.



The Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio

The Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio is an online tool that helps youth workers, youth leaders and youth organisations across Europe to understand their youth work competence and to develop it more effectively. Youth workers and youth leaders can use this tool in their practice to identify, assess and record

their competences, and to set further learning and development goals. The tool can also be used by trainers, youth work managers and youth policy experts, and generally by all those interested in the topic of quality development and the recognition of youth work.

The Portfolio is based on the approaches of the Council of Europe in the area of youth work and youth policy. It supports youth workers and youth leaders in reflecting on and improving their youth work practice, and in promoting democratic citizenship and human rights education and values with young people.

By using this tool, you can contribute to making youth work more widely known and better understood. You also gain more self-confidence in the work you do and improve the quality of your youth work. Finally, you become part of a wider community of practice and help develop youth work further!

The Portfolio is an important part of the mission of the youth sector of the Council of Europe in promoting the recognition of youth work and non-formal education as key dimensions of youth policy, and as specific ways of supporting young people in their path to autonomy and participation in all spheres of society. Other measures for the recognition of youth work include the preparation of a Charter of Youth Work and the development of quality criteria for youth work.

Youth work competence

The Portfolio is a tool for assessing youth work competence and for planning how to develop it. This process is very important, because youth workers are bound to be life-long learners and youth work itself is a field constantly under development. The key questions the Portfolio wants to support you to answer are: When you think about the youth work you are involved in, what do you do and what do you need to be able to do it well? What does it take to be a competent youth worker?

Competence is a key concept for understanding the tool. Competence is the "ability to do something successfully or efficiently". The term is often used interchangeably with the term "skill", although they are not the same. Two elements differentiate competence from skills, and make competence more than skill. When one person is competent, they can apply what they know to do a specific task or solve a problem and they are able to transfer this ability between different situations.

In youth work, competence is understood as having three interlinked dimensions:

Knowledge:	Skills:	Attitudes and values:
This dimension refers to all the themes and issues you know or need to know about to do your work. This is the "cognitive" dimension of competence. It is commonly associated with the "head".	This dimension refers to what you are able to do or what you need to be able to do to do your youth work. This is the "practical" or skills dimension of competence. It is commonly associated with the "hands".	This dimension of competence refers to the attitudes and values you need to espouse in order to do your work effectively. This dimension of competence is commonly associated with the "heart".

The Portfolio competence framework

The Portfolio looks at those things which **youth work usually or most commonly does**. We call these **functions of youth work**.

From these functions of youth work, the Portfolio tries to understand better what youth workers should be able to do, in other words, the competences youth workers need to have in order to do youth work.

The competences that one needs to have in order to do youth work have been divided into two categories:

Specific youth work competences – competences that make this field of activity unique

More general competences – competences relevant for other fields of activity but which are usually important for youth work

Together the identified functions and competences make up what we call the **Portfolio competence framework**.

The list of functions and competences presented in the framework is by no means exhaustive. You may find that some competences are not relevant for the work you do or may want to add other very important competences you need for the youth work you do.

List of functions and competences

Function 1. Address the needs and aspirations of young people

- 1.1 Build positive, non-judgemental relationships with young people
- 1.2 Understand the social context of young people's lives
- 1.3 Involve young people in the planning, delivery and evaluation of youth work using participatory methods, as suitable
- 1.4 Relate to young people as equals
- 1.5 Demonstrate openness in discussing young people's personal and emotional issues when raised in the youth work context

Function 2. Provide learning opportunities for young people

- 2.1 Support young people in identifying their learning needs, wishes and styles, taking any special needs into consideration
- 2.2 Create safe, motivating and inclusive learning environments for individuals and groups
- 2.3 Use a range of educational methods including ones that develop creativity and foster motivation for learning
- 2.4 Provide young people with appropriate guidance and feedback
- 2.5 Inform young people about learning opportunities and support them to use them effectively

Function 3. Support and empower young people in making sense of the society they live in and in engaging with it

- 3.1 Assist young people to identify and take responsibility for the role they want to have in their community and society
- 3.2 Support young people to identify goals, develop strategies and organise individual and collective action for social change
- 3.3 Support young people to develop their critical thinking and understanding about society and power, how social and political systems work, and how they can have an influence on them
- 3.4 Support the competence and confidence development of young people

Function 4. Support young people in actively and constructively addressing intercultural relations

- 4.1 Support young people in acquiring intercultural competences
- 4.2 Promote interaction between young people who come from diverse backgrounds at home and abroad so that they can learn about other countries, cultural contexts, political beliefs, religions, etc.
- 4.3 Work creatively on and with conflicts with a view to transforming them constructively
- 4.4 Actively include young people from a diverse range of backgrounds and identifications in youth work activities

Function 5. Actively practise evaluation to improve the quality of the youth work conducted

- 5.1 Involve young people in planning and organising evaluation
- 5.2 Plan and apply a range of participatory methods of evaluation
- 5.3 Use the results of evaluation for the improvement of their practice
- 5.4 Stay up-to-date on the latest youth research on the situation and needs of the young people

Function 6. Support collective learning in teams

- 6.1 Actively evaluate teamwork with colleagues and use the results to improve effectiveness
- 6.2 Seek and give feedback about teamwork
- 6.3 Share relevant information and practices in youth work with colleagues

Function 7. Contribute to the development of their organisation and to making policies / programmes work better for young people

- 7.1 Actively involve young people in shaping their organisation's policies and programmes
- 7.2 Co-operate with others to shape youth policies

Function 8. Develop, conduct and evaluate projects

- 8.1 Apply project management approaches
- 8.2 Seek and manage resources
- 8.3 Give visibility to projects, write reports and make presentations, for a variety of audiences
- 8.4 Use information and communication technology tools when necessary

Using the Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio

The portfolio includes a self-assessment tool and a learning plan.

Self-assessment of youth work competence

Evaluate your competences using a form to rate your competences.

Describe your competences and bring in evidence and examples.

Ask your colleagues or young people to provide feedback on your competences.

The screenshot shows the 'Self-assessment of youth work competence' page on the Council of Europe website. The header includes the Council of Europe logo and navigation links. The main content area features a sidebar with a list of competences, with '1.1 Build positive, non-judgemental relationships with young people' selected. The main panel displays 'COMPETENCE 1.1' and a form to rate its relevance. The form includes a dropdown menu set to '5 - Highly relevant' and a large text area for providing evidence. A character count shows 'Number of characters left: 2000'.

Set up your learning plan in order to further develop your competences.

Identify what more you need to learn

Set up a timeline for your learning and the ways in which you want to learn.

Over time, you can go back to your self-assessment and learning plan, check your progress and assess your competences again.

You can also:

publish your self-assessment and learning plan and read those of others

print your self-assessment and learning plan and create an "offline" Portfolio where you can add other evidence for your path as a youth worker or youth leader (diplomas, testimonies, examples of products you have developed for your youth work, etc.).

You can use the online tool as an individual, or as a team or organisation!

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COUNCIL OF EUROPE COUNCIL OF EUROPE CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Home portfolio user list published portfolio

You are here: Youth Portfolio > portfolio

portfolio COE YOUTH PORTFOLIO

Home > Learning Development Plan

1 Address the needs and aspirations of young people

1.1 Build positive, non-judgemental relationships with young people

1.2 Understand the social context of young people's lives

1.3 Involve young people in the planning, delivery and evaluation of youth work using participatory methods, as suitable

1.4 Relate to young people as equals

1.5 Demonstrate openness in discussing young people's personal and emotional issues when raised in the youth work context

1.6 Demonstrate that youth work practice reflects the needs and aspirations of young people

2 Provide learning opportunities for young people

3 Support and empower young people in making sense of the society they live in and in engaging with it

COMPETENCE 1.1
Build positive, non-judgemental relationships with young people

YOU DECIDED TO LEARN MORE ABOUT
Active listening of young people and rephrasing and summarising what people say. Using "I" statements in the discussions with young people.

How would you like to improve your competence? Examples: get more training, attend a university course, read more about the topic, test through youth work activities, develop a new approach in youth work, discuss with colleagues or young people, self-reflection, get feedback.

[Link to self-assessment](#)

Number of characters left: 400

Ideas and suggestions for using the Portfolio

FOR INDIVIDUAL YOUTH WORKERS / YOUTH LEADERS

The online European Youth Work Portfolio can be useful for you as an individual youth worker or youth leader to:

- self-assess the current level of youth work competence
- set up learning and development aims and pursue those in ways you will identify
- after a certain time, revisit your self-assessment to see what has changed, update your Portfolio or restart the process

Making a Portfolio is a dynamic process and we invite you, if you use the tool, to revisit it regularly. It can be a good friend in supporting you to keep your motivation to learn more and develop your youth work competence. You can easily check whether the self-assessment made at one point in time is still valid, and then update the parts for which changes or developments have taken place.

If you are working in a formal institution or structure, you might have to take part in a performance review or appraisal. It can be relevant to conduct your Portfolio review shortly before such an appraisal takes place, because it can provide you with information and arguments to include in the discussion of your performance with your supervisor.

Otherwise, you can decide for yourself when it makes most sense to do it – for example, in conjunction with a regular team evaluation, or a discussion with your volunteer or professional supervisor, at the beginning and/or end of an internship, or when you need to revise your CV for a job application.

FOR TEAMS OF YOUTH WORKERS / YOUTH LEADERS

There are two ways to do a team competence assessment using the Portfolio. The first takes place in 2 steps, with each team member conducting their own self-assessment, and then collectively discussing aspects of team competence using the competence framework as a guide.

All the team members can also conduct the Portfolio assessment exercise together, with their teamwork being the subject of the assessment, rather than individual competence. In most cases, this only requires that you replace 'I' with 'We' when conducting the assessment. So for example, when thinking about intercultural competence, the team exercise would be to assess how the team collectively understands its own intercultural reality (i.e. team composition and composition of the groups of youth it is working with) and how it deals with it (i.e. with each other and collectively with the participants).

FOR ORGANISATIONS

The Portfolio can be used as a learning and development tool for an entire organisation! Like teams, organisations can learn collectively and reach higher potential, and Portfolio provides a tool for people in positions of responsibility in organisations to reflect on the way the organisation is functioning and developing.

You can use the Portfolio as a basis for the development of a 'quality assurance framework'. A quality assurance framework is a set of principles and guidelines that an organisation uses to make sure it is doing its work adequately, in line with its stated mission and objectives and with the needs of its beneficiaries. The development of an organisational competence assessment and learning plan can form the foundations of such a framework, and for contributing to an organisational development strategy.

FOR YOUTH WORK MANAGERS

The Portfolio can be used as a learning and development tool for an entire organisation! Like teams, organisations can learn collectively and reach higher potential, and Portfolio provides a tool for people in positions of responsibility in organisations to reflect on the way the organisation is functioning and developing.

As a youth work manager, you can use the Portfolio as a basis for the development of a 'quality assurance framework'. A quality assurance framework is a set of principles and guidelines that an organisation uses to make sure it is doing its work adequately, in line with its stated mission and objectives and with the needs of its beneficiaries. The development of an organisational competence assessment and learning plan can form the foundations of such a framework, and for contributing to an organisational development strategy.

You can also integrate the functions and competences of youth workers from the Portfolio into the process of appraisal and objective setting for the youth workers or youth leaders that you are coordinating.

Furthermore, you can use the Portfolio framework as a tool for identifying the learning needs of the youth workers and youth leaders you are managing in your organisation of institution.

FOR TRAINERS OF YOUTH WORKERS

The Council of Europe Youth Work Portfolio can be a very useful tool for trainings of youth workers and youth leaders.

In a training course, the trainers can use the Portfolio as a reference when they develop their training course curriculum.

The Portfolio can also be used as a self-assessment tool for participants in training courses related to youth work development. For example, participants can use the Portfolio at the beginning of a training course to assess where they are now with their youth work competence, and also use it to set up learning goals that they want to achieve during the training course. The trainers can use these learning goals of their participants in order to shape and fine tune the curriculum of their training course.

The Portfolio has been used in the majority of the training courses of the Youth Department of the Council of Europe on youth work topics. It has been used for setting the course curriculum and for develop an individual portfolio of each participant. As such, it has also served as a basis for the certification of the training courses.

Trainers can also use the Portfolio as a support tool during processes associated with training, such as mentoring or coaching.

FOR POLICY MAKERS

The Portfolio initiative is a specific example of the commitment of the Council of Europe's member states to promote the recognition of youth work based on the principles of non-formal education. This commitment was formalised through the Council of Europe's Recommendation Rec(2003)8 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the promotion and recognition of non-formal education/learning of young people and subsequent follow-up texts. In providing a tool for individuals, teams and organisations to assess their competence, the Portfolio contributes to increasing transparency around the quality of youth work.

Policy makers on any level, from local to European, can use the Portfolio in order to set up standards or tools for recognition of youth work.

For example, the Portfolio can become the basis for the development of a profile of youth worker that can support the recognition of youth worker as a profession.

The Portfolio can be used by policy makers in defining the curriculum for the training of youth workers. The Portfolio can also be useful in certifying the training or the learning outcomes that youth workers had as a result of youth work training.

In the realities where youth workers already need to undergo a specific training to be recognised as youth workers, the Portfolio could be a complementary tool of self-assessment and development.

Policy makers can support youth organisations in making use of the Portfolio as a tool for quality improvement of youth work programmes and actions.



THE COMPETENCE PASSPORT

Process of self-evaluation and empowerment

Introduction

Individuals learn and develop their personal and professional sides whole their lifetimes, very often not even being aware of it. Learning can take place in formal, nonformal and informal conditions. However, society does not recognise equally the values of these three forms of learning and skills that are acquired outside the formal conditions. Therefore, individuals do not recognise the skills acquired outside school or university, although the skills acquired outside the formal conditions are more functional and more applicable in their realities. Passport of competencies takes us interestingly through the adventure of self-discovery and self- evaluation.

The "German Institute for Adult Education" (DIE) conceded their copyright to GIZ- The German Developmental Agency in Bosnia and Hercegovina, to use the instrument called ProfilPass in Germany in the year of 2011. In Bosnia and Hercegovina, this instrument got the name Competence Passport. Later, Competence Passport for Young people also arrived in BiH. At the end of the project, GIZ left the licence for using these instruments to the home association of citizens- SKILLS (skills.ba).



The Competence Passport – tools, instrument, compass

The Competence Passport is a process in which advisor and advisee take part. Advisor and advisee are a team and they go through all phases the instrument has set. The Competence Passport does not end at the moment the team writes down final words on the map. This is why we consider it a process, and not a simple self-evaluation which at the very moment can help advisee and yield results. Absolutely not. The Competence

Passport is based on lifelong learning, a process in which individuals actively take part although they often are not aware of learning results or their development.

The Competence Passport is based on humanistic psychology and constructivist learning model. According to humanistic psychology, individuals change, develop and learn all their life. Therefore, learning does not stop when individuals end their formal education, but it goes on in form of nonformal and informal learning. Through the Competence Passport, advisees have the chance to identify value of various types of education, situations and events in their life, which have also contributed to their personal and professional development. At this point, we come to constructivist learning model which teaches us that reality is subjective and it is us who create it. Process of making the Competence Passport is exactly creating reality by viewing the past and planning the future.

During training, advisors get different tools, such as Advisor's handbook, different tools which can improve communication, such as life line, associations – photographs, “appearance/behaviour – result – change”, set of cards with cheat sheets which can help us during consultations and different types of nonformal education.

Handbook is the main part of the toolkit. It contains information about the Competence Passport, its theoretical hypotheses and structure, consultation process, communication skills, role of advisors, methods and techniques which can be used in consultations. The handbook also contains 10 key competences used for making certifications.

Life line is an interview technique which joins techniques of asking questions and representing user's CV graphically. Life line is made by the advisor after the interview with the advisee. Then, the advisor graphically represents everything he/she have been told. During the interview, the advisee puts certain life events either on negative or positive side of the life line. This technique guides the advisor to further action and it helps him/her to approach certain areas of activity, showing the direction of the consultation. Life line is the connection between the advisor and the advisee. After the advisor gives life line to the advisee, they become a team and this is their first step together and the first project.

During the action, advisors are likely to test their creativity and use different methods and tools during the consultation.

Within the Competence Passport the advisees recognise their skills, learn about their abilities, and plan how to invest identified competences in their future. This process is a surprise as the advisees meet themselves, strengthen their self-confidence by recognising their skills and become readier to cope with the future.

First and foremost, the advisees start with their CV in the section “My life – Overview”. At this point, the advisees identify so called success life stories. Afterwards, there is real fun because we move to the next section called “Areas of activity”. Individuals go through different areas of activity of their life presented within the Competence Passport, and they are elementary means of labor. The areas of activity are: school, professional education, professional life and work experience placements, home and family, hobbies and interests, military service/alternative civilian service, political and civic commitment, extraordinary circumstances, etc. In this section, the advisee together with the advisor names activities exactly stating what he/she has done during the activity, has learned, or can do. What the advisee has learned or can do is the skill that he/she should rate from A to C2. Within the Competence Passport there is a scale which helps both the advisee and the advisor during evaluation and review later on. Review within the Competence Passport is in section named “My competences – A review”. At this point, we recognise the skills we should improve if we find them important. Those are the skills rated as level A and level B. On the other hand, skills rated as level C1 and C2 are our guidelines for seeing competences. After review, the advisor has the proof to issue the certification of competence to the advisee. The following section is “My objectives and the next steps” in which the advisee sets goals and produces action plan for their realisation. In section “Competence Passport plus” the advisee can append his/her certifications, certificates, diplomas, attestations, etc.

When the consultation process ends, the Competence Passport becomes compass for the advisee, helping him/her with accomplishing goals and directing him/her towards them. It has been already mentioned that this process is not completed. The advisee can add activities, derive and add new skills and competences, restart consultation process, because once we feel that we have something to add, it means that we have continued with our personal and professional development.

The Competence Passport for young people

The Competence Passport for young people is designed for teenagers aged 13-18. This instrument is a chance to empower young people to start in time recognising the significance of education outside formal circumstances, and values which derive from voluntary and social engagement. What is important about the Competence Passport is that young people get information in time that self-assessment is important, and not only outside assessment. Also, the Competence Passport for young people indirectly promotes one of four principles referring to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which is the right to participation. This right is based on child-related freedom of speech.

Young people start their journey through the Competence Passport with section “My life”. At this point, they look back at important people in their life. Life line helps them to look back at important events in family, in free time, at school. This way they realise that life is full of beautiful and less beautiful events and that it cannot be a straight line. In this section we see whether they have had some practical work experience, or take part in social life of community. They also talk about what is important to them at the moment, who their role models are, i.e. what qualities they appreciate and what their aspirations are.

In the second section “My strengths” the advisee thinks about the things he/she does in his/her free time, at school, and in the household. These activities help him/her to come to a conclusion which are particular strengths and competences he/she possesses.

Section “My qualities” helps young people to assess their qualities and tendencies, and they talk with other people about themselves and their qualities. This way they learn how to deal with what other people think of them, and how to talk with others about their behavior. Comparison between their self-assessment and other people’s opinions helps him/her to see their true self.

In the section “My interests” young people talk about their current wishes and goals, things they are proud of, interested in and enjoy doing. Then, they make line of the future thinking about what their life would look like in 15 years thus showing the wishes and goals they want to achieve. This section is followed by another one known as “My goals” which contains young people’s thoughts about their future development. Only the person who knows what he/she wants can achieve his/her goals and make his/her wishes come true. In this section, young people can track down their future profession as well. The person who knows his/her particular strengths, qualities and what he/she is interested in can decide on their future profession more easily. There are various exercises that encourage the advisees to look for more information about the desired profession, such as Where can he/she work?, What are similar professions?, What occupational specialisations are there?, What kind of knowledge and physical and social skills should they possess?, etc. After all the details referring to “dream job”, there are some practical steps to be taken before getting to the desired profession.

At the end of the Competence Passport, young people summarise everything they have gone through in the process of making the Competence Passport and write it down in the section “Who I am and what I want”, which can be used when applying for voluntary activities, projects, workshops, scholarship, or when writing a CV.

In the last section, the Competence Passport allows young people to file their documentation, such as diplomas, certificates, prize documents, attestations, certifications, acknowledgements, etc.

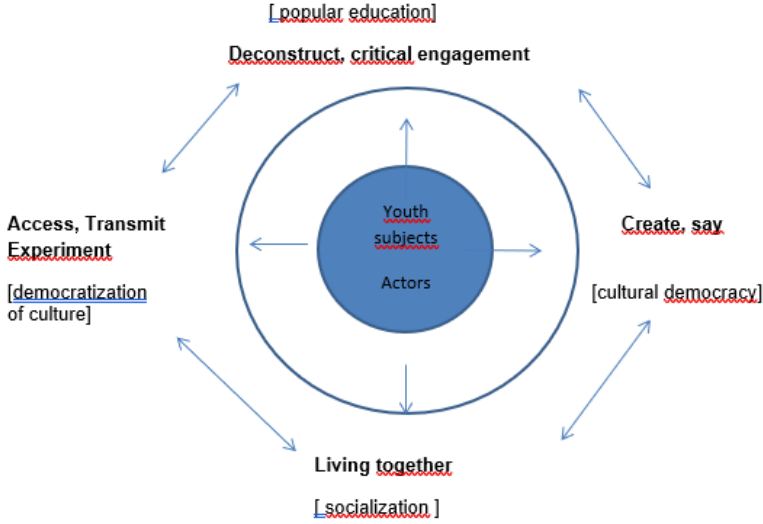
Conclusion

The Competence Passport for people 18+ and the Competence Passport for young people (aged 13-18) are tools that are very useful when working with young people, especially for youth workers. Instruments such as the Competence Passport and the Competence Passport for young people are the tools that can help youth workers with strengthening young people and their self-confidence. We believe that these instruments can help with repairing the damage made by formal education and its unreal goals and grading system, which often do not lead to acquiring skills and competences that fit current labor market or society demands. Also, these instruments are a good temptation for young people to be incorporated in community as active individuals who can affect changes positively.



MAPPING OF REALITIES

During the preparatory phase before the Seminar, participants were asked to provide some information concerning the eventual use of tools for evaluation, assessment and recognition of Non Formal Education learning processes: in this chapter, we present the results of this research:

Country	Are you using any method for evaluation and assessment in your organisation/institutions? If yes, please specify.	Are you using any national and/or regional instruments/certificates to validate and recognise the NFE competences acquired? If yes, please specify.
Belgium	Yes, the “compass for our action” is a method of evaluation that we start to use in the youth centre. It’s a long-time evaluating process of every action of the youth worker. We start to use it not a long time ago for evaluating our self in our animations, workshops and daily work in the youth centre. During a specifically worker meeting we tried together to find the right place of each activity of the youth centre into the compass.  The second round is a reflexion about the place of each activity on the compass and thinking about the change that we can bring to the animations to reach the different axes (Using mind mapping for example). As we know if an animation is at the centre of the compass we’re approaching the main goals of the youth centre.	
Bosnia Herzegovina (Ognjen)	I often use self reflection which I facilitate trough discussion. This is not standardised method, but it relies on universal psychological principles and approaches. Like asking open questions and provoke critical thinking of participants. I use this in every situation.	

Bosnia Herzegovina (Natasa)	For evaluation and assessment of new volunteer counsellors we have documents which they, together with their mentor, fulfil based on practical exercises they have (which include practicing of simulated calls). This evaluation form includes reports on counselling techniques that new counsellors use while practising. This form is used also for analyzing some of their first real calls, until they become independent counsellors. For evaluation and assessment of other counsellors we use reflection and direct feedback on real calls. On group supervisions, we discuss “difficult” calls to see if we could do better next time as a team. Also, on supervision we practise simulated calls in which case every member of team gives feedback to counsellor that practised. All these evaluations are based on important techniques of counselling, counsellors skills, beliefs and irrational beliefs that can be detected based on counsellors “mistakes”.	
Bulgaria	For each textbook we create we included a section for evaluation and assessment of results of teaching and learning. This section includes tools for formative, summative and self-assessment. All the tools are custom made for the particular textbook topics, they link to the 7 transversal skills and to 1 or more of the 8 key competences. We often synchronize the tools to European Qualification Framework (EQF) – levels 2 and 3.	No, not using certificates. This might change after the Seminar 😊
Denmark (Sakiu)	At the moment I am a student so evaluations and assessments are through exams. But in my previous work we used a sandwich-model in terms of giving feedback to both co-workers and inmates (I was a supervisor and interrogator at a correctional facility in Greenland). The sandwich-model is a 3-step way of giving feedback, where you first start by being complimentary or encouraging through talking about what has worked well, and then you get to the 2nd point where you would address something that might have been problematic or could have been done better. And then you finish off again by being complimentary and encouraging so the person would leave the evaluation with a sense of having been treated fairly and can be optimistic about any upcoming challenges. Previously I have been a youth football coach and assistant coach for a ladies football team in Nuuk, and had 2 courses through DBU (Danish Football Association) to become a youth coach. But that was more about teaching techniques and introducing ways of working and performing, and then evaluate in terms of what we thought could work better for the team.	

Denmark (Olga)	As I primarily work in the Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) framework I use its tools to change maladaptive learning and thought patterns in youth and adults. Also we try together in common work to build new skills, more effective and safe. CBT has a wide range of evaluation and assessment tools, such as tests, interviews, homework diaries, cognitive restructuring tables, Anxiety Change Expectancy Scale (ACES) and its validation, A-B-C model, Cognitive Therapy Scale - Revised (CTS-R).	
Slovenia	In our Association we are using Youthpass, especially with the Erasmus + projects.	There are some other national certificates to validate and recognise the NFE competences, but we only use Youthpass since it is the most widespread.
Serbia	No	
Poland	Self-reflection	Youthpass
Romania	Yes, the evaluation is carried out annually on the basis of a self-assessment / evaluation sheet, with performance indicators established by the director and the deputy director of each unit / educational institution, together with the staff / coordinators of the methodological committees or functional departments, the criteria in the frame sheets.	Instruments, national and / or regional certificates for the validation and recognition of acquired NFE skills are not used.
Spain	For evaluation and assessment of new volunteer counsellors we have documents which they, together with their mentor, fulfil based on practical exercises they have (which include practicing of simulated calls). This evaluation form includes reports on counselling techniques that new counsellors use while practising. This form is used also for analyzing some of their first real calls, until they become independent counsellors. For evaluation and assessment of other counsellors we use reflection and direct feedback on real calls. On group supervisions, we discuss "difficult" calls to see if we could do better next time as a team. Also, on supervision we practise simulated calls in which case every member of team gives feedback to counsellor that practised. All these evaluations are based on important techniques of counselling, counsellors skills, beliefs and irrational beliefs that can be detected based on counsellors "mistakes".	

RECOMMENDATIONS AND GUIDELINES

The process of identification of the recommendations and guidelines has been realised directly by the participants to the Seminar through a guided process that started from personal feelings, ideas and approaches to arrive to a collective and agreed point of view. The work has been summarised in a way to provide, for each tool, elements of strength and weakness, recommendations and possible suggestions

YOUTHPASS

Strength of the tool	It's on line It's very useful while applying for a job and it looks professional as "short bio" Its recognition is growing as a professional certificate Explore and evaluate self learning process from a certain activity A very practical and effective tool It's important that recognition come through an accredited European Agency working in direct contact with the Programme
Weakness of the tool	Not clear meaning and distinctions among competences It is not possible to plan further steps Its impact depends by the learning stage of the user It can be faked Restricted access
Recommendations	To use it as application form with volunteers that want to join and cooperate with NGO/team Recommended to volunteers and/or beginners in Non Formal Education that are not aware of their learning process Important to use in specific activities that clearly are learning oriented (job Shadowing, Training Courses, etc.)
Suggestions	To add an additional blank space when certificates are issued To simplify the definition of competences

YOUTH WORK PORTFOLIO

Strength of the tool	It's on line, with an easy access and updateable It is possible to edit the contents and follow the improvement It has detailed reflection of the professional practices It is possible to add competences It is a very good tool to create a learning development plan with reminders Possibility to use it in order to develop one or more competences Focused on Youth workers competences It goes through the own lifelong learning experiences Good concept of self evaluation, self assessment, self reflection Useful tool to set up goals within an organisation and/or a working group in order to offer better quality of the services
Weakness of the tool	Requires a lot of time to fill it properly There are no feedbacks from "third parts" Requires a lot of self-discipline and caring in constantly updating it There is no a real final certification

Recommendations	Its use is very useful in order to give adequate tasks for (newer) members of an NGO team according to their preferences/competences Can be used for training of volunteers To collect/summarise all our activities at one place Encourage youth workers of NGOs to use it for better quality of the job and to set development of learning plans Multiply the use of portfolio to other stakeholders In an NGO it is recommended to be used with new members and volunteers but also with Youth workers in order to better define fields of intervention, roles and engagement
Suggestions	It should be upgraded and spread as an official recognition tool To add dialogue components such as tutor and/or supervisor It should be promoted more and more

COMPETENCE PASSPORT

Strength of the tool	There is an advisor that helps and follow the procedure in around 4-6 meetings It helps to better address professional development plans and to choose a possible job Practical tool to discover the own knowledge, skills, values, attitudes Very useful for professional orientation of youngsters
Weakness of the tool	It needs a trained and recognised coach/mentor to be developed It's not for free Not formally recognised everywhere There is no a final advice It is not available in many countries
Recommendations	To use it as reward for volunteers in our organisation To use it with children with disabilities To use it with high school students for professional orientation To use it to discover the own competences and have a "line of life" It can be used/implemented in Formal Education System To be presented and applied to students in high school in order to facilitate the recognition of skills, needs and interest and to address the proper choice for University and/or labour market To consider it to be constantly updated/upgraded cause connected with all life experiences
Suggestions	To train and more advisers To be promoted more and more To Make it available in more countries and languages

ARTICLES AND CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PARTICIPANTS

HOW TO MANAGE A NON-FORMAL EDUCATION UNIT WITHIN A FORMAL CONTEXT OF EDUCATION

by Stoyan Faldjiyski, Bulgaria

Introduction

Non-formal education emerges where the formal methodologies and content are not necessarily meeting the needs of the learners' vis-à-vis their anticipations for the future. This statement could be or not be valid in all circumstances but certainly it is reflecting at least a part of the requirements of the transformation from the 19th century educational paradigm to meeting the educational needs of today and tomorrow.

What is the big challenge thereof? How can non-formal processes be incorporated into the national curriculum so that the knowledge, skills, and, competences expected by the formal context are achieved while at the same time the teaching and learning processes are modernized? Very often the methodologies and content of the formal context are different from what non-formal education has to offer. Curriculum is much less flexible and comprised by tons of administrative requirements and frames for those that deliver the process (teachers, educators) which has its negative impact on those who acquire the results of the process (students, learners).

In this context it feels that the most logical introduction of non-formal methodologies and content into the school controlling environment is through guaranteeing that the expected pedagogical results (learning outcomes), within the official curriculum, could be achieved by the non-formal. Those results are evidenced through the processes for assessment and evaluation.

Assessment and evaluation

First of all, let's distinguish by the two nouns. Assessment is the process of objectively understanding the state or condition of a thing, by observation and measurement. Assessment of teaching means taking a measure of its effectiveness. 'Formative' assessment is measurement for the purpose of improving it. 'Summative' assessment is what we normally call 'evaluation.' Evaluation is the process of observing and measuring a thing for the purpose of judging it and of determining its 'value,' either by comparison to similar things, or to a standard. Evaluation of teaching means passing judgment on it as part of an administrative process¹.

Summative and Formative

Summative assessment summarises student achievement at a given time. Its purpose is to evaluate the final product of students' work or the process of its creation. We also call it an evaluation 'of' what is being learnt. It is being used at the end of a learning unit, at the end of the school year, or, the school stage (primary, secondary). Traditional tools, such as 'standardized tests', are not the best way for evaluation since they evaluate fragments of the educational content without looking to find out about students' understanding of the interlinks or the process of enquiring and problem solving. Innovative tools such as 'Portfolio' are better in this regards. Another good tool to use for summative assessment are the 'Reflective Journals' (see examples in Annex).

¹ Definitions by: The Institute for Teaching, Learning and Academic Leadership (ITLAL)

Formative assessment monitors student learning to provide ongoing feedback that can be used by teachers to improve their teaching and by students to improve their learning. We also call it an assessment 'for' what is being learnt. However, it can only be considered as formative when the gap between what the learner knows, understands and is able to do, and the learning goal or standard, has been closed. A good tool to use for formative assessment are the 'Multiple Drafts'. The latter are described as one of the three key elements for successful delivery of project-based learning (Work that matters. The teacher's guide to project-based learning, 2012). A lot of the non-formal education in schools around Europe and the West is organized around the project-based learning (PBL) concept. Formative assessment tools are largely used by the developers of non-formal education methodologies and content.

Summative or formative will also depend on the link with the learning standard. The former is more specific to the standard, the latter – more flexible.

The attractiveness of the tools employed by the non-formal education could be seen as an entry point for the latter to the formal context, which can be certainly enriched and diversified to better deliver its purpose by integrating assessment and evaluation tools developed by the non-formal education models. Examples of those are presented in the Annex to this article.

A non-formal education creation process

In the creation of non-formal content developers often start from a formal framework. This could be the national curriculum, European qualification framework (EQF) or cross-referenced mix of both (should the non-formal project aims for pan-European comparison). They investigate the requirements of the formal framework (expected pedagogical results) and start planning how to deliver those results but with a different methodology and content that correspond to an identified need that the formal context is failing to respond to. Another question is how to assess and evaluate those results so that the non-formal achievement could eventually be validated by the formal system. Validation is defined as 'a process of confirmation by an authorised body that an individual has acquired learning outcomes measured against a relevant standard' (Council of the EU, 2012).

This is to point out that the non-formal education has meaning for the formal context only when the latter is ready and willing to validate its achievements.

Further reading

In an annex to this article we present one example from an Erasmus + funded project 'Green Entrepreneurship Europe' (2015-2018), which illustrates how an identified need that the formal context is missing from the curriculum (preparing young people for European the circular economy future) is being delivered through non-formal teaching and learning methodology and content, while linking to national curriculum requirements, referenced in the EQF, and, by developing assessment and evaluation tools that could guarantee the acquirement of knowledge, skills and competences can be validated by the official system, should it be ready and willing to do so.

ANNEX 'GREEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP EUROPE' PROJECT

The project partners have focused on knowledge, skills, competences, and, values, which are not commonly delivered in schools and which add value to formal context (the national curriculum). The pedagogical results (learning outcomes) of the project were divided in two parts. The first focused on rethinking of the human economy. It included the knowledge, skills and competences that could help young people to better understand and be able to use information about how nature works, how everything in it is interdependent and what is the role of the person and the economy for sustaining/violating the natural laws. The second part focused on building the circular economy. It included knowledge, skills and competences, which can help young people develop entrepreneurial and transversal skills that can allow them to manage their business ideas in alignment with the natural laws.

In general, the assessment and evaluation covered three main goals: a) to support learning, b) to outline the individual achievements, and, c) to determine the learning programs. The assessment and evaluation tools were integrated into the project learning modules so that both teachers and students can see progression throughout their learning. In this respect, assessment tools were mostly formative and immediate, as a part of the instructional process.

When incorporated into classroom practice, formative assessment provides the information needed to adjust teaching and learning while they are happening. In this sense, formative assessment informs teachers and students about student understanding at a point when timely adjustments can be made. These adjustments help to ensure students achieve targeted standard's-based learning goals.

Mainly tools for non-formal assessment have been used. These types of tools provide information based on unstructured methods. Non-standardised assessment tools are related to the analysis of individual/group behaviour (through observation) or review of personal knowledge, skills, competences, qualities, etc. With these types of tools there isn't a formal procedure for their implementation or analysis of the results. The teacher/educator uses their personal and professional skills here for analysis and interpretation.

Below is a short description of the different types of assessment tools, used by the project.

Reflective learning journal

A learning journal is a collection of notes, observations, thoughts and other relevant materials built-up over a period of time and maybe a result of a period of study, learning and/or working experience. Its purpose is to enhance the learning of the participants through the process of writing and thinking about their learning experiences.

The use of the reflective learning journal is applicable and useful in many ways:

- It provides a 'live' picture of the learner's growing understanding of a subject experience;
- Demonstrates how the learning of the participant is developing;
- Keeps a record of the learner's thoughts and ideas throughout his/her experiences;
- Helps the learner identify his/her strengths, areas for improvement and preferences in learning;
- A learning journal can help the learner to be reflective about his/her learning.

In the project, the reflective learning journal has often been used as an assessment tool. It has been used in two ways – as an individual learning journal and as a group one, where learners together can fill in their observations, the results of their experiments, realisations derived from group tasks, etc. An example for an individual reflective journal task is to reflect on the question: *'What is biosphere for me?'* or just to write down in the journal *'What did I learn today?'*. An example for a group reflective journal task is: *'Creating a portrait of the successful entrepreneur'* or *'Creating a marketing strategy'*.

As the examples show, results and reflections from other types of assessment tools can be written down in the reflective learning journal. The Reflective journal itself is considered an assessment tool, because on one hand by reviewing it the teacher can easily see what are the acquired knowledge, skills, competences or the gaps of the learners. On the other hand, the learner can evaluate their knowledge depending on whether they manage to cope with the given task or they find it difficult.

Self-assessment tools

As the name indicates these are lists with statements or questions that help learners evaluate themselves. Knowledge, skills and qualities can be evaluated. Through the self-assessment tools, the teacher receives information on one hand, about how the learner evaluates the presence or the development of the respective knowledge, skills, competences, and on the other hand allows the learner to realise the extent to which they know the respective learning material and/or possess/develop the respective skills.

An example of a self-assessment tool used in the project is self-evaluation of the entrepreneurial skills. Different entrepreneurial skills are given, and each learner must evaluate the level of mastery of each one of them.

Reflection questions before and after module

These are questions which can help easily check the extent to which learners have acquired a given learning material, based on comparison of their knowledge before a given lesson/module and after. In the project such reflection questions are used in the beginning and in the end of the modules. An example of such reflection questions is the explanation that learners must give to different concepts.

Another example is the so called 'Bubble sheets after each chapter' – where learners have to finish sentences provided in different 'bubbles'. For example: *'My personal objective for the day:'*, *'My key learning objective for the day:'*, (these are usually given in the beginning of the module), while in the end sentences like: *'Today I discovered:'*, *'Today I was inspired by:'*, *'Outside the classroom today I learnt:'*.

Control tests by teachers

These are usually a compilation of questions, tasks, cases, statements, which examine the degree of learning/understanding the material. The control tests can be of different length and cover a bigger material (a complete training module), but also be focused only on a specific sub topic. The types of questions and tasks that can be included, can also vary – open questions, multiple answer questions, different scales, cases, etc.

Thanks to these tests, the teacher can measure on one hand, the level of knowing a given learning material, the development of the respective skills and competences, the way of thinking of the learners, and on the other hand they can get an idea of the general level of the learners – whether they are moving at the same

pace in terms of acquiring the new knowledge, whether a certain topic needs to be focused on more, whether there are learners that need more individual work, etc.

An example of a control test used in the project is a questionnaire with five open questions:

- Give three examples of interconnections in nature.
- List three reasons concerning the importance of preserving the soil resources.
- List four groups of organisms which participate in the soil processes.
- Answer the question: 'What would happen, if any of the interconnections is destroyed?'
- Answer the question: 'What would the recycling process look like if its creator and designer was Nature?' OR 'What would the recycling process look like, if it handled the waste problem?'

Questionnaires for teachers

These are a number of questions, assessing the level of learning and understanding the material, which are answered by the teachers, based on their observations of the work and participation of the students.

A sample questionnaire for teachers, used in the project is the 'Teacher observatory' tool, where the teacher answers a number of questions, related to the students' performance with 'yes' or 'no':

- Learners find inspiration in nature. YES/NO?
- Learners understand the role of the soil in the circle of life. YES/NO?
- Learners present original ideas and a new way of thinking. YES/NO?
- Learners understand the difference between recycling, as delaying the conversion of resources into waste and recycling as turning something that is waste in one process into something that is a resource in another. YES/NO?
- Learners demonstrate advancement in knowledge and formulate questions that are adequate for educational purposes. YES/NO?

As it can be seen these questions cover certain subtopics/modules/part of a whole Learning Pack.

Feedback

The Feedback is a powerful method of assessing the achieved results. It is based on observation of participation in the learning process, presenting different documents related to learning, etc. Research shows that feedback is very important for moving learners forward in the education process. It gives learners an overview of what they are doing well in terms of the learning material and what should be the next steps to take in the learning process.

In the project, feedback is included in several ways: feedback from peers (peer assessment), feedback from teachers and from external people. The peer feedback can be provided when learners work in groups and each one of them has the opportunity to observe, interact with others and comment on the work of the other peers in general and individually. In some of the project materials, peer feedback is included in the end of each module, when learners working in groups, receive feedback by the other groups in terms of how their work can be improved.

The feedback from the teachers is not just related to giving a mark, a sticker or saying 'good job'. It is most effective when it includes a description (oral, written) of the things that the learner is doing well and those they

need to develop further. The feedback on the learner's performance is usually based on the targeted learning goals and the expected outcomes. This is also the context in which teachers provide learners with feedback in some of the project materials. In the end of the modules, the teachers give students feedback on predetermined criteria (questionnaires) concerning their strengths and the needs for improvement.

The feedback from external people has the same goals and tasks – to present the point of view of the evaluator regarding the level of understanding of the learner and of implementing the goals and tasks of the learning process. In the project materials, the representatives of the business are given the opportunity to provide feedback to the learners, regarding the green business ideas and business plans they have presented.

Group and individual activities

A wide variety of activities and tasks can be part of this tool – from individual tasks for research or information analysis, through different types of individual or group experiments, quizzes, filling of charts, sorting of cards, role plays, case solving, creating presentations, posters, etc.

With the help of group or individual exercises, the teacher can observe and assess how certain skill and competences are being used – not only the ones related to the study material, but also the so-called soft skills.

In the project materials, almost all listed types of groups or individual activities can be found. Learners are involved in different types of role plays, research and experiments, preparation of presentations, conceptual cards, posters, matrices, etc. Each one of these exercises can be used for the development of the respective knowledge, skills or competences, as well as for the evaluation of their level of development.

Observation

The Observation can be described as a stand-alone non-formal assessment method, which helps the trainer determine what is the level of certain knowledge, skills, and, competences, or, do they need further development. In project materials, observation is rather a supporting method, which goes hand in hand with the execution of different exercises and tasks that the learners are given. The teacher observes the learners, their participation, reactions, and behaviours and can take notes on the knowledge and skills that are acquired and expressed, and which ones need to be worked on additionally.

Conclusion of assessment tools

In the described project the assessment process happens throughout the entire learning process and as we said, different types of tools are included in the different learning modules. In the end of each part, the project has provided a list of the different assessment tools that are included in the different learning modules, to illustrate once more the variety of the assessment tools that have been used.

Validating the learning

To follow up/monitor the project learning process, two approaches have been used – one based on assessing learning as it takes place and a second based on validating the learning.

It is important to clarify that by validating the learning, what is meant is not validating in the sense of recognition and certification by a competent authority at a national level. The project validation process aims to contribute to verifying only the benefits of the learning materials, identify the acquired knowledge, skills and competences, and, evaluate the level of achievements.

To evaluate the acquired knowledge, skills and competences, for each of the learning modules, the project created one common assessment tool that is included in all learning modules. The questionnaire is based entirely on the project framework and consists of two parts: one is a self-assessment questionnaire, which is filled by the learners, the other is a questionnaire, which is filled by the teachers.

To validate the usefulness of the learning process and the level of achievements in the learners, they fill in their part in the beginning and in the end of the entire learning process and the results are then compared. Teachers also evaluate each one of the learners, by filling in their part of the questionnaire and based on their observations of the entire learning process. They can also fill in the questionnaire in the beginning and in the end, and if they are working for the first time with the respective group of learners, the initial evaluation can be in the end of the first module, after they acquire observations on each of the participants.

ASSERTIVE COMMUNICATION

by Ognjen Tadić, Bosnia Herzegovina

Human language is the most complex form of communication in the world. We humans can develop our language speaking skill only if we are exposed to it at early age. Otherwise, the ability to speak human language will not develop. The term communication originated from Latin *communicare* which can translate to “to share”. The root of this term is *common*, meaning “belonging to all”. This root is also present in the term “community”. So, ability to speak a language develops through sharing within a community.

When two beings communicate they exchange information. The ways in which they can exchange information are unlimited. Usually, we divide communication on verbal and non-verbal. Humans are the only species that uses both verbal and non-verbal communication. One of the famous ways of classifying communication is on passive, aggressive and assertive communication, and this applies to verbal and non-verbal communication as well.

People who communicate passively are avoiding arguments, they are quiet and they avoid eye contact, they usually don't have opinion or have difficulties expressing it, and they will say “sorry” a lot. As if they are sending a message “I'm not important; my opinion isn't important”. The goal of passive communication is to please other and avoid conflict.

On the other hand, people who communicate in aggressive way requests and gives orders, accuses and blame others, talks loud, doesn't listen and interrupts. They send a message “I'm more important than you”. Goal of aggressive communication is in domination over another person.

Passive and aggressive communications are important ways of communicating, and they have adaptive role. If a person is attacked by someone who is violent and much stronger, sometimes it's better to act passively and avoid danger in order to save life. And sometimes it's necessary to act aggressively to defend ourselves.

Assertive communication is usually defined as the ability to express thoughts, feelings and beliefs in an honest, direct and socially adequate way, respecting the rights of other people. Assertive person is a good listener, respect others and requests respect, knows how to compliment and criticize, they have self-esteem and they are confident in themselves, they share their thoughts and emotions, and they don't have problem to disagree. The message assertive people send is “I'm important, and you are important”. The goal of assertive communication is in mutual respect.

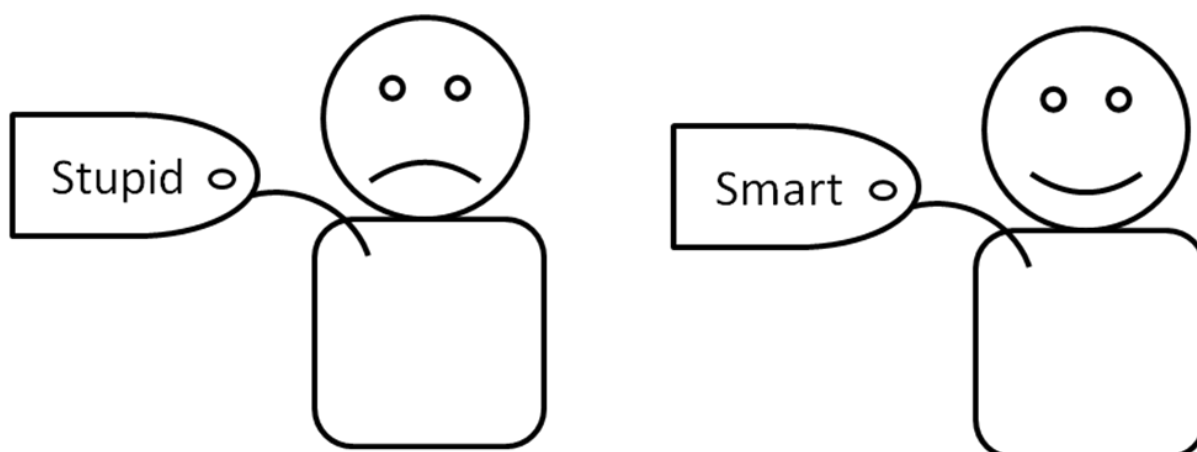
Since it relies on mutual respect, assertive communication is a language of human rights. We learn how to be assertive from others. If significant others (e.g. parents) don't respect our rights when we are children (in other words, significant other is aggressive), there is a big chance that we will develop passive style of communicating. This happens because significant other is sending a message “you are not important”.

If significant other doesn't respect its own rights (e.g. passive parent), he or she is sending message "you are more important than me". In these conditions there is a possibility that the children will develop aggressive communication style. So, if we want children to develop assertive communication skill we need to show them that they are important as well as we are.

	Passive	Assertive	Aggressive
Self-evaluation	I'm not important	I'm important	I'm important
Evaluation of others	You're important	You're important	You're not important

Assertive communication as a form of assessment

Development of healthy, independent, and assertive personality can be achieved in assertive environment. In other conditions, like aggressive environment, this process is more difficult. One of the main reasons why, is related to social labels. When a significant other acts aggressive he or she tends to use labels as a form of punishment. Almost as they send a message "I'm more important than you, which gives me the power to humiliate you". Sometimes parents aggressively say to their child: "How many times I have to tell you...". At first glance there are no labels in this message. But asking someone this question, especially child, is like saying "Are you stupid?". Word "stupid" is a label, and if that label sticks to personality child will start to think about itself as stupid. Children are most vulnerable to these messages because their personality is not yet fully developed. They depend on significant others and they believe them, so they are at risk of believing in any label they get. That is the way how people learn about themselves. This leads us to conclusion that language and communication develop and shape personality, which is supported by body of research.



Knowing and understanding all this can significantly improve our assessment, especially when we work directly with people, face to face or in group. First thing we need to understand is how our behavior and communication affects others. If we act assertive there is a bigger chance that others develop trust towards us, and to speak in open and honest way.

Sometimes we think that we acted in assertive way, but people react like we acted aggressive. This usually happens when we communicate with passive person. Sometimes, no matter what we do or say, some people react with withdrawal. When we recognize that someone behaves like this we can first ask person how he or she feels in the moment. We can also say (with calm and warm tone): "It seems to me that you feel uncomfortable. What do you say?". This way we inform other that we notice their behavior, and that we would like to know more about it, a sending message "You and your emotions are important to me". Saying "It seems to me..." also send message "Maybe I'm not right". This is important because assertive person doesn't impose opinion, rather suggest.

Sometimes, no matter what we say or do, others behave as we insulted them. This communication feels like someone is aggressively defending itself without even being attacked. This situation, for example, can occur when we work with youth with difficult backgrounds or with juvenile delinquents. When we recognize these behaviors we can say (again with calm and warm tone): "I'm sorry if something I said upset you. Would you like to tell me what I said?".

When other act aggressively no matter what we say or do, assertive communication can't help a lot. Sometimes our only solution is to leave situation. Assertive communication is useful in assertive environment, with assertive people, but it can't guarantee success in relations with passive or aggressive people. Also, we may act assertive, but how other people perceive our actions depends on their life experiences.

Another way of utilizing assertive communication in assessment is to use it to better understand others. Buy the way someone behave and communicate we can conclude a lot about their personality, and even about their early childhood. We can do this buy assessing social labels that shaped someone's personality. Labels are usually nouns and adjectives. They form personality's attributes, and if that attributes become parts of personality traits it is really difficult to change them, if possible at all. If inner label is self enhancing person is less likely to have difficulties in everyday situations. For example, it is definitely self enhancing to have inner label "I'm smart". But if inner label is self-defeating, like in "I'm stupid", person will have difficulties in everyday functioning.

One way to assess inner labels is to directly ask a person:

- How would you describe yourself in that situation?
- What does that situation tells about you?
- How would you call people who behave like you?

- What nouns or adjectives would you use to describe yourself?

We need to be aware that inner labels are usually hidden in unconscious. That means that we are usually unaware of our inner labels, and to assess them sometimes can be really difficult. It would also be exhausting and depressing to be permanently aware that “I’m stupid”. Becoming aware of inner self-defeating label can be painful process so we need to take extra care and be prepared. If we recognize that someone has inner labels that significantly affect that person’s life we can suggest counseling with mental health professionals.

As we can see, besides assertive communication skill we need patience and caution.

Assertive communication as a form of self assessment

By now, it is clear that assertive assessment deals with inner, self-defeating labels. So, how can one assess its own inner labels? Answer is already partially given in previous section. There are a lot of situations in life that make us feel bad, make us question our acts, make us insecure and confused. These situations can provoke our inner self-defeating labels. When we ask ourselves “How would I describe myself in that situation?” we are potentially opening a door to our unconsciousness. There we can discover hidden relation towards ourselves. More precise question to assess inner relation would be “Am I assertive to myself”. To find out answer on this question we need to observe our behaviors. To be assertive to yourself is to respect and to take care of your body and your mind. Overweight problems, lack of physical activity, drug abuse, unsolved conflicts, risky sexual behaviors, procrastination, etc. these are all ways to disrespect your body and your mind.

People sometimes speak in assertive way, and behave in assertive way towards others but to really be assertive is to be self important. Many people have difficulties in becoming self important. One of the main reasons is because they consider it selfish. To be self important is to be in contact with your need. Need for others is one of the basic human needs. Self important people are aware that they need others, and that others need them. That doesn’t make them selfish. As we described earlier, assertive people have tendency towards mutual respect. If you have troubles in understanding are you assertive to yourself, imagine someone who is really important to you and ask yourself would you feel OK if that person acts the same way as you did.



WHO IS WHO!

The Seminar "Evaluation, assessment and recognition in Non Formal Education" was realised by:

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We are all just human beings: for this reason, it is possible that this publication contains mistakes or inaccuracies. At the same time, we will be happy to receive further contributions, suggestions, new proposals to enrich this booklet.

In case, feel free to write us to
circoloarcichieti@yahoo.it

Thank you very much!

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