



by Rita Bergstein

## The European strategy on recognition of **non-formal** learning in the YOUTH programme

### Imagine all the people...

30 young people coming from five different European countries, spending 10 days together in a youth exchange somewhere in Europe dealing with issues like environmental development and sustainability and what this means for being an active European citizen. Imagine what they learn during the preparation phase of the exchange, the exchange programme and the follow-up. The learning is about...

- their cultural identity,
- knowledge of other cultures and specific subjects,
- organising things together,
- perception of others,
- dealing with conflicts while trying to understand each other or having different concepts,
- a lot of small things concerning independence, democracy, living together in a group, expressing themselves, dealing with unforeseen situations
- a lot more!

### Imagine all the people...

In Europe nearly 150 000 young people take part in activities of the YOUTH programme every year. Imagine the amount of “tons of learning”, if you could say that each young person learns a package of 50 kilos...

And the question is who recognises this learning? How can young people present their “tons of learning”? How can they use it for their life? Do young people really realise what they have learned?

To answer these questions, to make learning transparent and visible and to get more recognition for non-formal learning

in Europe, at national and at local level, is the idea of Youthpass. Youthpass deals with the issue of recognition of non-formal learning in the YOUTH programme. Youthpass will be a variety of instruments to visualise what young people learn in YOUTH programme activities. Different tools will help young people to recognise their own learning process and to make the learning outcome visible and usable when applying for a job, looking for a school placement...

### Sharing all the world...

Getting recognition for activities in youth work is a challenge for youth workers and youth leaders all over Europe. The Youthpass development will foster the recognition of youth work at European level, influencing national youth policy developments and directly offering tools for an impact at local level.

Without the large number of hours that youth workers and youth leaders in their professional and voluntary life invest, youth work at European level would never exist like it exists today. Youth workers and youth leaders at local, national and European level argue for, discuss about and develop European projects with young people.

The outcome is a huge variety of creative, dynamic and highly professional projects in international contexts, here we are talking about some 10 000 projects in the YOUTH programme. Getting recognition for this important effort that the youth work field makes at local, national, European and international level, is one aim of Youthpass.

## Development of Youthpass in 2006

During the first half of 2006, in nearly ten countries possible tools for the recognition of learning in the YOUTH programme will be tested. Concerning each of the Actions these are :

**Action 1** (Youth Exchanges) - Individualised certificates for all participants

**Action 2** (European Voluntary Service) - Revised version of the EVS Annex

**Action 3** (Youth Initiatives) - Preparation of an individualised certificate

**Action 4** (Support Measures) - Preparation of a certificate and an individualised assessment tool

The overall concrete aim of the Youthpass development is to start issuing certificates in Action 1 and Action 2 from the beginning of 2007 in conjunction with the implementation of the new programme **Youth in Action**. The implementation of certificates and assessment tools for all Actions will follow.

## Sharing all the world...

Around 70 % of learning in a young person's life takes place in informal and non-formal learning surroundings, such as the family, youth organisations, peer groups, leisure time and, for sure, even in YOUTH programme activities. (Around 30% of their time is spent in formal learning contexts). Being aware of their learning and using it, for example, to make a personal step further in life, to apply for a job, to go ahead with things, it would be necessary to have something handy to share the experience. During the next years we will be developing

1. qualified certificates to certify learning in youth exchanges, European Voluntary Service, youth initiatives and training courses, and
2. assessment instruments to reflect and follow a non-formal learning process in a deeper way.

Guidelines through the development process will be

- to find a language which is understandable for the target persons,
- to find procedures of access for everybody,
- to cover needs of young people
- and to identify easy ways of using the instruments and of getting information.

## Sharing all the world...

Over the next years, the SALTO Training and Cooperation Resource Centre will develop Youthpass in close co-operation with the European Commission and the YOUTH National Agencies in the 31 Programme countries. The needs of young people and the experience in recognition of organisations in Europe will be integrated.

### Notes and references :

- If you want to be informed about the Youthpass development, please visit the SALTO-YOUTH web site at : <http://www.salto-youth.net/youthpass/>
- If you want to share ideas about recognition and the approach of Youthpass, have comments or questions..., please contact Rita Bergstein at [rita@salto-youth.net](mailto:rita@salto-youth.net)  
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<http://www.salto-youth.net/TrainingandCooperation/>
- Of course, I used John Lennon's song Imagine for the sub-headings in this article.

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