

Graphic facilitation, or how to catch (wild) ideas

Gülesin: *So the speaker matters...*

Siiri: When the speaker speaks naturally, it helps the graphic recorder. So it is a good combination. If he or she is inspiring all through the talk, then there is a chance that you get almost all of it. And I am also very happy that here they do not use power point presentations much. This is one of the most difficult things for a graphic recorder. If the information is so condensed and the speaker speaks from the slides, it is not natural. I think, for the graphic recorder, the process here is very natural.



Illustration by Vanda Kovács

Marlies: *How much do you think it's documentary work and how much is it your own interpretation? How do you navigate between those two poles?*

Bianca: I think we are never objective enough, because everything we say is going through our filtre. So, sometimes the speakers might be emphasising certain things, but it's possible that my filtre says something else. When you know the field and have background information, it's a lot easier.



illustration by Siiri Taimla

Marlies: *Is there a pattern or an image that has been recurring for you at the conference? Or that has been on your mind?*

Siiri: Common ground. But also standardising – fitting or not fitting into the criteria.

Vanda: What is youth work?

Bianca: For me it's the attitude: "We can do it."

Aline: Empowerment.

Marlies: *How would you translate that into an image?*

Bianca: Maybe Superman. Or maybe a bunch of people flying together to a star.

Aline: Yes, I think it's important to say that it's a bunch of people and that they are flying together, because the collective theme is something that we can see almost everywhere here.

Bianca: That's the most important thing to mention, when it comes to youth work – the community. In youth work we can have more Supermen, not only one, like in reality.

Aline: Everybody is a Superman. (Laughs)



Illustration by Bianca Gainus



From self-reflection to recognition

By Eliza Popper



*Yes, **you!** I am talking to **you!** Has anyone told you lately how amazing you are? That your tireless work and all your endless efforts aren't in vain? **You** make the lives of so many others better. **You** inspire. **You** give hope. **You** make a change. Don't ever give up!*

Recognising the work and efforts of others is ultimately the key to having motivated, inspired people around you, no matter if we are talking about volunteers, employees, students, participants, family members or friends. If you want to empower people around you to do their utmost best, recognise their efforts. I am sure you can recall moments in your life when you felt that your work was unappreciated and all in vain, and that no one saw or recognised the effort you put into it. You felt that maybe, just maybe, it's not even worth it and you should just give up.

Well let me tell you a secret. Recognition begins with you! You can't really expect others to recognise you without recognising your own values first. Let me guide you through a journey – a journey from self-reflection to recognition, focusing on different tools and methods to help you on the pathway to recognition. Enjoy the ride.



From self-reflection to recognition

Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the fairest of them all?

Once upon a time, there was a bureaucrat. A bureaucrat who, when looking in the mirror, asked himself this question every day: Who am I? And who do I want to be – a bureaucrat or a civil servant? He used the mirror to remember who he was supposed to be.

When this story was told at the 2nd European Youth Work Convention, all 400 participants laughed in unison. But I wonder how many of those 400 have looked in the mirror recently and asked themselves the most important question: who am I? And who do I want to be?

The symbol of the mirror as a reminder of who you are or should be has been used in many Disney movies (I can certainly recall two major scenes from *The Lion King* or *Mulan*). Looking in the mirror is the very first step of self-reflection. I invite you to try it tonight, before going to sleep. All you need is you, a mirror and some time without someone banging on the door to use the bathroom.



Once you have confirmed that you are who you are, the best person you can be, it's time to dig deeper. You need to reflect on **why** you are where you are and why you do what you do. Why are you a youth worker? Why did you start and why are you still motivated every day to work in this field? It's very important to ask yourself these questions every now and then. You can do this during a longer session in front of a mirror, but there are many other ways to explore your inner motivations and remind yourself of the reasons you started this work and why you keep on as a youth worker, even in times of crisis, in the face of so many challenges faced by the field, and sometimes – even without recognition.



Illustration by Siiri Taimla

What's your story? The impact of youth work on your life

How Youth Work Changed My Life is a compendium of stories from youth workers, compiled and edited by Nicholas Paddison. The compendium was created in order to share these stories with others and to show how being involved in youth work has affected lives in terms of personal or professional development, “civic” engagement or other aspects. The compendium is about individual stories, whether from a local community youth centre, a national event/activity or at the European or international level. Their aim is to inspire others and show how youth work **can** make a difference. But why is it important to share your story? Most people think they've got nothing to say, but when they read or hear others' stories, they realise that they also have a story to tell... and it's just as important!

So the question is obvious: How did youth work change **your** life? Write down your story and share it with others. **Your** story **matters**! Sharing is not only caring, but it can be inspiring for others, and you might inspire another person to become active in the youth field. Besides, writing down your story, connecting the dots of how one event led to another and how youth work affected and impacted your life can be a great starting point for self-reflection: remembering where it all began and what you've gained from youth work. This is essential to keeping up your motivation and continuing as a devoted youth worker every day.

Everyone has a story to tell

Digital storytelling is an incredible tool. Have a look at these stories. Touching, aren't they? I am sure you could find a story you can relate to.

<https://vimeo.com/127715464>
<https://vimeo.com/127608312>
<https://vimeo.com/127717390>

These short videos were created during the Digital Storytelling Workshop organised by the European Youth Forum and ReRoute in April 2015.



Digital storytelling is not only about telling the story, but also sharing the perspective and the feeling behind it. It's not about identifying the impact, or telling how you became a youth worker. It's about identifying the moment of change in your life. Through experiential and creative learning, participants have the opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings about their personal experiences in youth organisations. The process of digital storytelling gets participants to connect with their most inspiring and valuable memories and share them with a community of peers. The entire process triggers a deep reflection of why someone is engaged in youth organisations, how he or she contributes to the organisation and what he or she gets out of it: including a sense of belonging, getting to know others and the world. By the end of the process, each participant produces a 2-3 minute visual story intended to foster an increased understanding and awareness of the impact of youth work on society and individuals alike. So how does it work?

From self-reflection to recognition

The process of digital storytelling

- Self-reflection with different methodologies. The question is not: "What is the impact of youth work for you?" – The point is rather to find the moment of change in your life.
- A self-reflection activity: pick a picture that relates to your youth work experience. What does it remind you of?
- Write your story.
- Share your story with the group.
- Get feedback from the group: "If it was my story, I would..."
- Record your story. There is incredible power in reading your story out loud.
- Gathering images to accompany the text.
- Find the right music.
- Finalise your video.
- Share.

The basic rules of digital storytelling

- Be short and specific, so people can connect to your story (don't be abstract).
- Be emotional, use your senses.
- Use the first person ("I").
- Write as you would speak.
- Technology is the means, not the end.
- You should not use a chronological/linear approach.
- Bring out the moment of change.
- Everyone has a story to tell – Dare to tell your story!
- We learn together.
- It will be an excellent story, because it will be **yours**.

DANGER!

- This activity is not to be done individually. Digital storytelling derives its power from a group process, reflecting together, gathering feedback and ideas from one another.
- In case you wish to run such an activity in your organisation, please be sure to use a facilitator who has gone through the process before.
- Think of your human resources. This activity cannot be done in very large groups.
- Please ensure that the activity is done in a safe environment.
- Do not mix therapy with digital storytelling!

Yes, yes, I know, there are a bit too many restrictions. Why am I even sharing this with you, if you can't do it alone, or even in your organisation without a professional facilitator experienced in the topic? Because you can not only get inspired from the stories created during the European Youth Forum workshop, you can indeed bring this tool to your organisation and provide the opportunity to take part in such an incredible process. You can still use some elements of the process individually, a few self-reflection exercises, or the part of writing your story, identifying the moment of change, or even recording your story by reading it out loud... and listening to it! All you need is your phone to record it. Isn't it powerful?

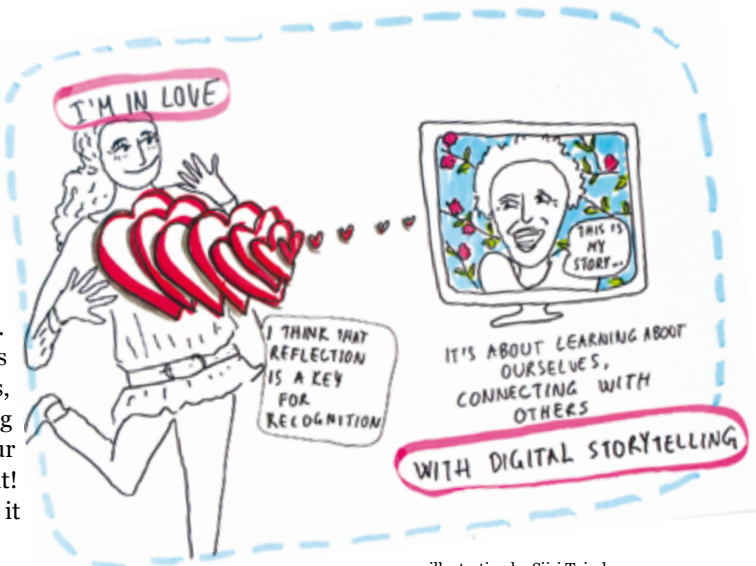


illustration by Siiri Taimla



© Still from Estel Buch: Belonging



illustration by Marlies Pöschl

Youthpass

It's time for competences

Now that you have discovered the true reasons why you wake up every day, work with and for young people, the moment of change; reflected on why you started, what gave you motivation then, and what gives you motivation to continue tirelessly every day, it's time to look at how you have grown throughout the process. What competences and skills have you developed throughout your experience as a youth worker? We can't expect others to recognise our experiences and competences without being clear ourselves about what we have learned! Lucky for us, there are many tools to help. While the Youthpass and the Europass are already quite widespread and well known, the Council of Europe's Youth Work Portfolio is still on the road towards wider recognition – although this wonderful tool can really provide the important step between self-reflection and recognition. The tool used to be known as the European Portfolio for Youth Leaders and Youth Workers, but was recently redesigned and further developed, and was launched at the 2nd European Youth Work Convention.

The renamed Youth Work Portfolio is an online tool that helps individuals, teams and organisations doing youth work around Europe to understand their competences and to develop them more effectively.

This tool can also be used by trainers, youth work managers and policy makers and generally all those interested in the topic of quality development and recognition of youth work. The portfolio helps you analyse where you are

now with your youth work competences; gather evidence on the quality of your work, your aptitude for it and ideas for making it better; and explain your work to others in a way which is easy to understand. The portfolio organises the competences into seven functions. On the website of the portfolio, you can not only do your own self-assessment, but also find background information about the different functions and competences, and read other portfolios to find inspiration. It also gives ideas on how you can use the portfolio – and believe me, there are many ways not only for youth workers, but also for organisations, policy makers, managers, etc. to use this tool.

Recognition

So... Here we are. With many tools that support your self-reflection and that help you recognise your motivation, your development and your values. The above tools not only help you create more self-awareness, but also output that can be shared with others. By going through the different processes of self-reflection, you will be a better storyteller, a more convincing advocate for youth work, and a more self-aware person who will be able to communicate clearly what you've gained through your youth work experience.

I am not going to get into recognition. Where we are, what is done, what needs to be done? That could be another 4-page-long article, or longer. The ultimate message I am sending you today is this: recognition can only happen if you know your story and if you are willing to share your story.

So here's an invitation: SHARE YOUR STORY!